

# ADULT EDUCATION & NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

V.K.R.V. RAO

UNION MINISTER FOR EDUCATION & YOUTH SERVICES

374  
Rao



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTH SERVICES, GOVT. OF INDIA, NEW DELHI 1970

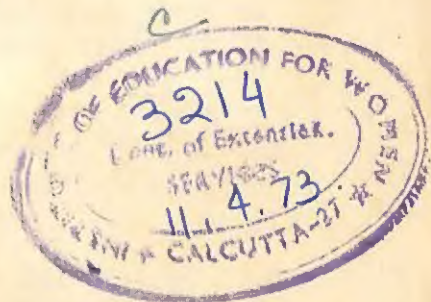


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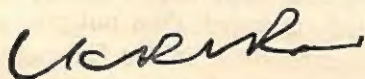
## FOREWORD

Adult Education, to my mind, has a positive contribution to make to economic growth and social development. I have been convinced about it both as an economist and educational planner and I have been talking about it on many occasions. As Member-in-Charge of Education in the Planning Commission, I was able to persuade my colleagues to accord high priority to adult education programmes, but, unfortunately, the Fourth Plan, which has finally emerged, does not give the priority which I wanted to accord to it in the Education Plan. Ever since I took over as the Minister of Education, I have been trying my best to give the necessary priority to adult education and I am sure that the State Governments and the Union Territory Administrations will do the same.

2. In the various addresses on adult education and adult literacy, my theme has been that literacy, even though it is very important for promoting adult education, cannot succeed or sustain itself unless it is backed by a vigorous programme of follow-up action in terms of provision for reading materials, books and libraries. I have been pleading that adult education has a relevance even during periods of national emergencies when the whole community should be well-informed not merely by word of mouth but through written communication, etc. I have also mentioned that illiteracy does not go well with democracy.

Further, the rate of illiteracy and the rate of population growth have a direct relationship. From the point of view of either economic development or national integration or social cohesion or cultural advancement or preservation of democracy, it is essential therefore that we should achieve a hundred per cent literacy amongst our people.

I felt that it might be a good idea to present my thoughts on this important subject of adult education and adult literacy in one brochure and place them before the public on the 1970 International Literacy Day, which we are observing by holding a National Seminar on Adult Education from 8 to 10 September, 1970, at Bangalore. I am sure, this publication will stimulate the necessary interest in the subject and we will be able to prepare action-oriented programmes in collaboration with concerned agencies.



(V. K. R. V. RAO)

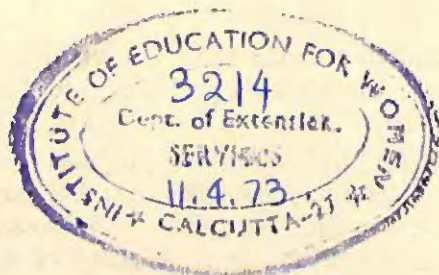
*New Delhi*

September 8, 1970

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**ADDRESS  
TO THE SILVER JUBILEE  
CONFERENCE OF  
INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION**

NEW DELHI MARCH 1964

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I AM extremely grateful to Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh for the kind and generous words with which she has introduced me to you. The subject on which I have been asked to talk this evening is adult education and social and economic development. I was happy to receive this invitation. In some way I have been connected with adult education, for a long time. In 1930, as a young lecturer, I organised in Wilson College, several courses of lectures in Bombay to educate adults on different subjects. This was for the first time that the academic community in Bombay organised what may be called extension lectures.

ONE

As Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University, I put forward a slogan that not only should people come to the University, but the University should go to the people. Accordingly, we set up a very extensive programme more or less based on the idea I had implemented in Bombay, only these were more systematic, better organised, involved a larger number of teachers, and had the status of being directly under the auspices of a university. There were general lectures on introducing India as it was called and several courses covering ten lectures each on different subjects spread over a couple of months; and these were given at a nominal fee of Re. 1 per course. Now that has become a permanent part of the activities of the University of Delhi.

I may mention to you straightaway that, in my opinion, adult education must have its primary and fundamental basis in adult literacy. I do not subscribe to the theory that there can be adult education without having literacy. As a matter of fact I would go to the length of saying that it has been one of the tragedies of this country, after we got independence, that we did not go in for a massive literacy programme. Any country, when it gets independence and goes in for social and economic development programme, launches upon a massive literacy programme. Only this morning I had the privilege of meeting the Soviet Minister of Education. He mentioned to me that after the Revolution they had given the highest priority to the liquidation of illiteracy and, within a period of about 10 years, were also able to completely wipe out illiteracy in their country. I think it is a matter for regret that after about 17 years of independence, we have failed to break the back of the problem of illiteracy in the country and, worse still, that we do not seem to be particularly bothered about it.



As a matter of fact, the percentage of literacy which was 17 in 1951 increased to only 24 by 1961. And because our population has been increasing, the total number of illiterates in this country, in absolute terms, in 1961 was larger than what it was in 1951. With 13 years of economic planning and about 17 years of independence, there are more illiterates in India than they were before the economic planning started. This is something which I have always resented. It is not that we did not have targets. A Committee, which was appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1948 and which was presided over by Shri Mohan Lal Saksena, had stated that 50 per cent of the illiteracy should be liquidated in the first five years. I am afraid that nothing near that number was ever approached even in the course of our first ten years of planning. I have a feeling that a major reason for this failure is that we tried to be very comprehensive and talked more in terms of social education than literacy. One of the banes of this country is to put before ourselves a very big idea and satisfy ourselves that because we have taken up a very big ideal, it does not matter whether we implement it in practice or not. It is very unfortunate. The very first thing I would like to say—I have been saying it and will continue to say so—is that a country where a vast majority of the people are illiterate, the fruits of economic development will not be commensurate with the investment in material inputs. Adult literacy is a pre-condition for massive and widespread economic development.

We have been talking all these days and months of stagnation in Indian agriculture. The whole country is exercised about it. We say, we must have more green manures, fertilisers and quality seeds and irrigation facilities, more contour bunding, etc., all of which is correct. We must have more inputs. But I have not heard any one

saying that in order to bring about an increase in agricultural production, the farmer must be made literate. Without literacy among farmers, agricultural production programmes cannot be put through on a wide enough scale. The village-level worker cannot be successful if the people with whom he comes into contact are illiterate. A man has got to be induced to read himself and write himself if he is to be counted as a human being. Hundreds of crores of rupees have been spent on the community development programme and yet not many people have been made literate in the rural areas during all these years. The people, whom we are expecting to increase production, are not in a position to learn and discuss among themselves. This can be possible only if literacy becomes part and parcel of their equipment. Take another field. We have been talking of family planning from the beginning of the Plans. How can we have family planning in a big way without literacy? We have to motivate the people and without literacy it is difficult to do so. Family planning has to have a positive and an individual approach. How can people react to a positive programme of this kind unless they have the instrument in their hands of breaking through ignorance and getting into the world of knowledge? It is not merely a question of distributing contraceptives. Does family planning mean only that? What will happen to social and ethical standards unless people are educated? Then again, we want to expand the cooperative sector and the cooperative movement. Can we bring about a cooperative society on the basis of illiterate members? I think something is wrong with the people who want to promote cooperation without widening the coverage of literacy. How can a farmer be in a position to know his inputs and outputs without knowing their relation to profits? How do we arouse the social consciousness in the people? Lectures do not make a people socially conscious and socially



developed. This has got to come indirectly. When people read of great men and great matters, it creates an impression. For example, when people read that in East Pakistan, during the recent riots, a good number of Muslims were also killed because they tried to protect the Hindu population, it creates an unforgettable impression. Now a thing like that creates in a person, who reads, some kind of feeling that there is compassion in human beings which can over-ride temporary passions. Therefore, when we are talking of agricultural production, when we are talking of cooperation programmes, when we are talking of social development and economic growth, we cannot do it on the basis of illiterate population. This is a major plank which I should like to place before you as a foundation of adult education for social and economic development.

But literacy is only an instrument. Literacy is not with education. It is a pre-condition. Given this pre-condition, what kind of education do we want? When we talk of adult education, we are, generally speaking, thinking of people who are not highly educated persons. By and large, we are thinking, if I may say so, of non-university people. It is true that today, knowledge is so vast and comprehensive that, for example, even if we may be Ph.D.'s in sociology, philosophy, etc. we would still be able to learn a great deal from a course of lectures on space travel. Adult education should not be confined only to those who have not reached the level of university. In terms of priority, however, we have to think more in terms of people who may not be in a position to go to universities. Many of them are people who have not even been to schools. Even if they have been to school for a few years, they have no opportunity to pursue their literacy afterwards. Now the vast numbers of them, therefore, whom we call education. Literacy enables education but it is not identical



adults for the purpose of this discussion, are the people who are not B.A.'s and M.A.'s; they may have done primary or middle education or just acquired literacy. The last will constitute the largest number as far as our country is concerned.

The kind of education that we give has got to use all the means of mass communication. Among these, I would give pride of place to the written words. In other words, there must be books, journals and pamphlets. In this country the number of literates is 104 million. If we just see how many books or the reading material is being used by these 104 million people in this country, we will find that we have not yet really gone in for adult education on a large scale in this country. Our literature in Indian languages is mostly in the form of novels. Even their number is quite small. Quite often, they are merely translations or adaptations of western novels. There are but few books on geography, economics, sociology, politics, philosophy, science, and technology in the Indian languages. In a programme of adult education, therefore, we have to obtain reading materials from all possible avenues. We have now to think in a very big way of the book, journal and magazine industry in Indian languages.

Then, of course, comes the spoken word. Though we have farmers' and rural programmes and so on, we do not give to the people anything which really links them to our past or future. A good deal of what we give to them is either music—good portion of which is light—and some kind of dramas and so on. We have got to attract people to listen in. We have to show far more imagination in using the medium of the spoken word. Themes must have their roots in the soil. India has been in existence for many centuries and the Indians have their traditions, ideas and

literature going back to many centuries. Unfortunately, the more anglicised we become the less we retain our link with the past. This has to be taken into account in our radio programmes for adults. Then of course we have got films. Films are a very interesting way of enlightening the people. I do not think films that will have an educational function are being shown in any of the theatres excepting good documentaries they get from the Government of India. I do not know whether the State Governments are also producing documentaries. I have great faith in the possibilities of using films for adult education, but they must have behind them more of a purpose and be planned with more imagination than at present. Nevertheless, if I were to give an order of ranking, I would certainly give a higher ranking to films as compared to radio broadcasts, with of course the highest ranking given to the written word.

We cannot have economic development without social development, but if we have social development, we are bound to have economic development. Economic development is an aspect of social development. Education has to remove superstitions, prejudice, and help in spreading interpretation of traditional values. Take the instance of untouchability. We have abolished untouchability in this country and have provided sufficient outlays for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. There are specific provisions in the Constitution also. Untouchability is something which has got to go away as a concept, as a faith and as prejudice. How many villages in India are there where both touchables and untouchables can drink water from the same well? What are the attempts which we have made at educating people? Gandhiji did this when he was alive. He functioned in a spectacular kind of way. It is the only way for a country like India.

What have we done since then? Sometimes I wish posters were displayed. How many films have been produced on this subject? It is no good saying, set the policeman on it. We cannot do everything by coercion and police methods—we have got to persuade the people, educate them. By persuasion, I mean education. Once the people are educated into it, then we can use the policeman for those who break the law. But we cannot run the society by policemen. Prohibition requires tremendous amount of education. What have we done to educate the public opinion? Therefore, we have to talk of adult education for social and economic development. Superstition, astrology—they are linked up with the absence of social education.

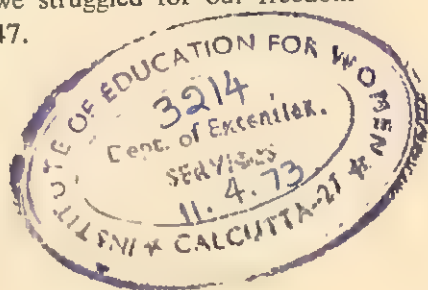
All the time, we are talking of economic development and growth rate. We are talking of 8 per cent and 9 per cent increase in national income. We are talking of inputs and outputs. I know this is a good thing. The more important thing, however, is the soul of the person, the humanity of the person, the temper of the person and for that he needs education. Therefore, I would say adult education has got to emphasise the social aspect of life. Developing a scientific climate and a rational temper are deeper things and these cannot be inculcated by the kind of education which does not involve the integrated use of man's mind and hand. Education, which does not emphasise the dignity of labour and merely creates a preference for trying or looking respectable is not education at all.

There are various ways of explaining concepts and techniques. We have got in the last 20-30 years, one of the biggest industries of the world, advertisement. Advertisement is based on tremendous amount of knowledge. The business magnates meet and discuss and evolve a well-planned programme in order to break consumers' resistance



and stimulate consumers' preference. I do not know why we should not use the knowledge of psychology and persuasion in this programme of adult education for economic development. Then we will have a system when the student will put his best, not only mental best but also physical best, in regard to his work.

I do not think the problem of adult illiteracy is going to be solved by making a provision of crores of rupees. No doubt we must have equipment, literature and all sorts of other necessary aids. But more important is a national determination to wipe out illiteracy. I am not satisfied with the target of achieving hundred per cent literacy by 1981. We have got to have programmes of wiping out illiteracy within a much shorter time. If illiteracy is to be wiped out from the country, we should take unorthodox steps to introduce adult education; and these would involve more than money, the voluntary and dedicated service of the millions who are already educated and can do their bit for bringing literacy and light in their areas and their neighbours who need it. Illiteracy is a sort of mental slavery and is as bad as physical slavery. If we get rid of this mental slavery we will also be able to remove economic slavery, then only can we become complete human beings as we intended to be when we struggled for our freedom and finally attained it in 1947.



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
ON  
ADULT LITERACY AND  
ADULT EDUCATION TO THE  
STUDY GROUP JOINTLY SPONSORED  
BY THE UNION MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION  
NCERT AND UNESCO**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 1964

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**I** T APPEARS to me a little odd that there should be any doubt about the importance of adult literacy in the context of social and economic development. I would have thought that this was one of those obvious truths which really do not need any elaborating or dilating. Everybody

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knows, for example, that if we do not put water along with the seeds, the seeds will not grow. If we put fertilisers, then the plants grow faster and bigger and we are able to get a larger output from our agriculture. The human being is somewhat like a raw material; and before we can make the raw material into a finished product, we have got to go in for a large number of inputs into the human being. I am using the word 'input' because it is a most understandable phrase in the context of our economic development today.

Perhaps your asking me to speak on this subject is just a formal excuse for giving opportunities to people like me to talk about the importance of adult literacy in the context of social and economic development, but actually what I am going to say is more than formal. For I know that in the last 13 years of planning and economic development, we have not succeeded in breaking the back of illiteracy in this country. We have increased our national income; we have set up many factories; we have also increased very substantially the facilities for higher education. We have increased even more substantially facilities for technical education; but if we look at the state of literacy in this country, we do not get a hopeful picture; the 1961 Census has shown that literacy in this country is still of the order of 24 per cent and if you start breaking down this figure of literacy and examine what is meant by it, you will find that the population which retains literacy in the sense that it makes some use of it is very limited. And that is really the keynote that I want to strike. It is not just the question of literacy. It is the question of making use of literacy. If you examine statistics of the so-called literate population, you will find, the bulk of them have not had education even up to the 8th class. It may be worthwhile carrying out



a couple of sample surveys among the literate population to find out what exactly is the texture of this literacy. It would be useful if one could take a few villages and then find out what precisely literacy means to the literate population and what use they are making of this literacy. Apart from this, if you break down again this literacy figure in terms of urban and rural areas, you will find that the literacy in rural areas is very much less. It is about 16 or 17 per cent in rural areas. Again, if you look at the figures separately for women and men in the rural areas, I believe that the illiteracy among women is of the order of about 93 or 94 per cent. How on earth can one talk or, if I may say so, dream of a high and accelerated rate of economic growth against the background of such an almost universal illiteracy in the rural areas? This vast mass of illiteracy is, I think, one of the real handicaps in the way of our economic growth and it is that which Indian planning has not been able to tackle so far.

Economic development is the result of, broadly speaking, two factors: the human factor and the non-human factor, using the word 'non-human' in purely technical and not in a value sense. And it is the human factor which contributes a little more than 50 per cent of the economic growth which has taken place in different parts of the countries of the world. The moment you concede that the human factor, what was first termed the residual factor, sometimes identified with science and technology, sometimes with education, sometimes with organisation, but often with all the three, but what essentially I would call the human factor—once it is conceded that the human factor is responsible for a very large share of economic growth, it becomes important to identify the elements that promote the efficiency of the human factor. Planning

can only create facilities for economic development. But the utilisation of those facilities depends on the human factor, upon the will of the human factor to use those facilities, and upon the capacity of the human factor to make use of those facilities. I think it needs no arguing to show that an illiterate person is not able to make his optimum contribution to economic growth because he is not able to respond to the facilities that are created for him. He is neither motivated to make use of those facilities nor is he qualified nor is he able to make use of those facilities. Therefore, for utilisation of the human factor which, I say, is a major partner in economic growth, you need literacy. I do not like the word 'literacy'. Education, adult education, is, I would say a *sine qua non* for enabling the human factor to respond to the big investments that we have been making for the development of the economy. We have been talking a lot of investment. We have invested Rs. 3500 crore in the First Plan; we invested a little more than Rs. 7000 crore in the Second Plan; we will be investing Rs. 11,000 crore in the Third Plan, and we hope to invest, maybe Rs. 21 or 22 or 23 thousand crore, in the Fourth Plan. So, massive investments are being made. But we have also been making some investments in human factor in the sense we are producing science, engineering and medical graduates. We are producing diploma-holders and secondary school graduates. We have been making a lot of investment in the human factor in so far as these aspects of the human resources are concerned. But when we come down to the vast mass of the people, the working people, the men and women of adult age, who constitute the bulk of the working force in this country, we find that our planning has been a failure, and if I may be bold to say so, our planning has been a failure not only in implementation but in conception and in priorities. We

have not fully realised the crucial place that adult education occupies in social and economic development.

As far as I am concerned, I attach to this subject of adult education a very high importance in the context of social and economic development. Indeed, I take pride in saying that it was the Planning Commission which was responsible for making an evaluation of the only big successful adult literacy movement in this country which was started in Maharashtra and which is called the Gram Shikshan Mohim movement. We sent our officers to Maharashtra who went round, made a full study and submitted a report. I am now seriously thinking, with a certain amount of editing, of printing that report on behalf of the Planning Commission and making it available to a larger audience than perhaps is now acquainted with it because it is in a cyclostyled form and it is not generally available to the public. And you may be interested to know that I was also responsible for getting the Maharashtra Government to do an evaluation of Gram Shikshan Mohim. I am glad to say that as far as adult literacy and adult education is concerned, the Maharashtra Government is thinking of wiping out illiteracy in five years while even the most ambitious programme produced by the Central Ministry of Education does not think in such bold terms.

I insist on using the word, 'education', because I know literacy does not include education. You have got 100 millions of literate people in this country. But I do not think anybody would say that we have 100 million educated people in this country or 100 million people who use their literacy. I give you three major reasons or three major links between adult education and economic development.



First—and I think, in a way, the basic—background for economic development is knowledge and desire for better ways of living on the part of the people. Even today, 82 or more per cent of the population in India live in villages. Now, people must get some knowledge of what is better life, even in elemental terms, in terms of clothing, shelter, education, health services, etc. Not only should there be knowledge of the better ways of life but there must also be the desire for getting better ways of life. This is the sheet anchor of economic development. It is the desire for a better way of life, knowledge of a better way of life, which is the basis for the motivation of economic development. And only then will the people be prepared to put in more work, show more enterprise, imagination, daring and take more risk, all of which constitute the background for economic growth.

The second thing which is necessary for economic development is readiness on the part of the masses to take to new ways of production and not be bound by traditional types and traditional ways of production. If you have a desire for a better way of life, then you must produce more. A better way of life is not going to be obtained by charity or by gift or agitation or more talk. In the last analysis, a better way of life can be secured only by more production and better production, and by not following the old ways of production. Therefore, in addition to acquiring knowledge of better ways of life and developing a desire for better ways of life, it is important that people should also be made to cultivate readiness to take to new methods of production, what Jawaharlal Nehru used to call, science and technology, what even Acharya Vinoba Bhave, calls, science and spirituality. Scientific approach means, apart from the rationality, inculcating confidence for trying new things. The moment

a scientist says that everything is known that is to be known, the scientist has no more reason to exist. There must be the readiness to adopt new methods, try new techniques, go in for new experiments even though this has not been done by one's father and by one's grandfather.

The third thing which is required in order to have the necessary background for economic development and the necessary building up of human factor for purposes of economic development—it is very important specially for those who are living in the rural areas—is that they should take a commercial or economic view of one's economic activity. By and large, in our country, the bulk of the people follow economic activity not as a matter of business but as a way of life, as a method of securing subsistence, not as a business activity. The moment you say a thing is a business activity, then calculation comes in, estimation comes in, analysis comes in, profit and loss come in, inputs and outputs come in, accounting comes in. Everybody knows that as long as a person regards economic activity merely as a way of life, he does not achieve economic progress. If we want economic progress, a person has got to treat his economic activity as a business and not as a way of life. This means that he must know some accounts, he must look on his economic activity as a business, what he is putting in, what he is getting out, how what he puts in can be broken down in components, which component brings more, which component brings less. This whole economic view of business activity and the business view of economic activity, is, to my mind, also an inevitable part of the background for economic development without which we will not get a proper utilisation of the human factor.

To sum up, therefore, economic development requires

knowledge and desire for better ways of living, readiness to take to new ways of production, and cultivation of a commercial or economic view of one's economic activity. I suggest that all this requires knowledge. In order to cultivate these three, what I call the three essential needs without which we cannot have economic development, without which we cannot make the human being play his proper role in economic development, we require dissemination of knowledge on a wide scale. And if I may say so, knowledge requires literacy as literacy is a major instrument for knowledge. I do not want to play down the other instruments of knowledge. I do not suggest that we do not have other ways of imparting or acquiring knowledge. We have the audio-visual methods of acquiring knowledge. In fact, in the olden days in this country, knowledge was largely acquired through the audio method, and not the visual method. This country, more than any other country in the world, is known for knowledge passed by word of mouth and from generation to generation. But this was not like radio broadcast talks which one hears for 15 minutes. When knowledge passed by word of mouth in ancient India, the pupil lived with the teacher so that it was not merely what he heard from the teacher expounding the Vedas or the Upanishadas or Gita or something else but he could ask the teacher questions. He could get explanations. Therefore, the knowledge could really become a part of his equipment, part of his blood and bones and flesh. To me knowledge has no meaning till it has become a part of oneself, as one's blood, or bones, as part of oneself. If we want to acquire knowledge, literacy is the most important way of doing so because it transcends both time and space. The film is useful, it is something which stimulates. But it is much more expensive to have films and radio than to have the printed word of the ordinary type that we know



as books. We cannot convert films and radio-records into books.

For economic development and utilisation of the human factor, however, mere literacy is not sufficient. The literacy that we want is not just literacy but what I call functional literacy. Functional literacy is literacy that is geared to the promotion of economic development. This in turn means that it is geared to the stimulation of the will for development and the creation of the capacity for development. Let me illustrate what I mean. Take the whole question of agricultural production. We all know the importance of agricultural production in this country. We have been hearing about agricultural stagnation. We also know that we are becoming dependent more than before on imports. Before the Second World War, our imports used to be 1.5 million tons of foodgrains. Now this year, I think, our imports are going to reach the record figure of something like 6 million tons of foodgrains. Obviously, we want an increase in agricultural production. Therefore, we must have more fertilisers, more pesticides, good seeds, etc. in the whole programme. We have a big massive programme of investment in agriculture in the Fourth Plan. We had of course quite a massive programme in the First, Second and Third Plans. But it is not enough. Economic development not only requires investment but it also requires, what I call, a favourable response ratio *i.e.* utilisation of the facilities that are created. If we do not have functional literacy we may create facilities but these will be utilised only by a few people. When Jayaprakash Narayan Committee on Weaker Classes comes to the conclusion that there is something wrong with economic development because only a small proportion of the population in the rural areas have

got advantages of economic development, this is because we have neglected this aspect of planning, namely, the preparation of the human factor to play an appropriate role in economic growth.

Then we have social development. I do not like to separate social from economic development, though I am doing it now for expository purposes. If we want social development, I would say that the first thing which is necessary is the creation of a rational attitude. We will find, if we examine the question, that the developed societies, by and large, must have a rational attitude. The creation of a rational attitude would mean conquest of superstitions and freeing of oneself from taboos, totems and astrology. I believe I am right in putting these three things together, taboos, totems and astrology. This rational attitude, to my mind, is an essential condition for social development.

It is important for social development that there should be an awareness of social obligation, an awareness of the fact that, being born in society, one is not free, nor can one think wholly of oneself. Quite apart from religion and philosophy and so on, as a sheer matter of social engineering, one's living in society automatically involves the acceptance of certain obligations without which there can be no such thing as living in society.

Then the other thing which is important from the point of view of social development--and which perhaps is even more important--is the development of the correct attitude, I will say, to begin with, towards woman. I think no society can grow to its full stature which does not have the correct attitude towards woman and this is the attitude of the acceptance of equality and dignity of woman.

I think social development essentially involves the acceptance of the human worth of the woman, that she is as much a human being as the male, that she has got dignity, that she has got personality, she has got worth. In other words, a real recognition of the equality of man and woman, to my mind, is an essential condition for proper social development.

Now apart from this attitude towards woman, the other thing which is very important for social development is the correct attitude towards education, and towards knowledge; this attitude towards knowledge should not merely be the kind of attitude which we are having in this country, an attitude comparable to the attitude towards God, that is, worshipful but non-practised. Similarly, the attitude towards knowledge has been one of practice. Social development requires that this should go. This is well illustrated by the way in which the Russian society deliberately went in for developing this correct attitude towards knowledge. Now the development of the proper attitude towards education and knowledge is, in my opinion, a very important instrument for social development.

Then, another aspect which is necessary for social development is taking, what I call, a long view rather than a short view. A society which takes a short view is not a society which can develop because the essence of society is that it is immortal, it is continuous. Those who constitute this society live and grow and die. But the society of which they form a component has a continuity extending far beyond the lives of those who compose it at any one moment. Therefore, taking the long view rather than a short view, is an extremely important desideratum for social development.



To sum up, social development requires creation of a rational attitude, conquest of superstition, freedom from taboos, totems and astrology, cultivation of an awareness of social obligations and the recognition of one's role in society and developing the correct attitude towards women, towards education, and towards taking the long rather than a short view. To my mind, all these are essential conditions for social development. And again to illustrate these abstract things in concrete terms in the context of our own society are panchayati raj, cooperative movement and family planning. I take these three things together as they are vital for the economic and social development of our country. Panchayati raj is an excellent concept, where you transfer functions to local bodies. Nobody can quarrel with the concept of the panchayati raj but panchayati raj cannot function effectively unless there is social development. Similarly, the cooperative movement. We want cooperative marketing, cooperative farming, cooperative purchasing, producers' cooperative and consumer cooperatives. We want to go in for cooperatives, because we do not want a regimented capitalist society. At the same time we do not want an apparently unregimented capitalist society. So, in order to have the best of both the worlds, we in this country talk of cooperation and cooperative movement as the most important instrument for building up a socialist society that at the same time is consistent with human dignity and individual freedom. How can we have cooperation or cooperative societies without social development? If today we find so many faults in our cooperative societies, it is because it does not have a background of the right type of social development. And then we talk of family planning. Family planning, besides other things, requires education, a different attitude towards women, understanding of the long view rather than the short view, etc.

etc. Therefore, these three vital requirements of our development programmes, namely, panchayati raj, the cooperative movement and the family planning movement—all these three, in my opinion, require education, and literacy, as an instrument of education. Again the literacy that we create should be functional, geared both to stimulation of the will for development and the creation of the capacity for development. It must be also geared to creating the right attitudes. The literacy that we give should be geared to the promotion of rationality, to the denial of superstitions, to the creation of the awareness of social obligation, and towards the creation of the right attitudes towards education, towards woman, and towards taking a long rather than a short view.

If I may sum up this part of my argument, I suggest that without education—there can be no adequate education without literacy—there can be no worthwhile social and economic development. The human factor which is a most important instrument both for the promotion of economic and social development and which simultaneously is the main beneficiary of economic and social development, requires that there is education on a mass scale. This is not possible without adult literacy. Therefore, I would conclude, as far as this part of my address is concerned, by making the assertion, which I hope is not just an *obita dicta*, that without adult education and adult literacy (a) it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development which we require, (b) it is not possible to have that content, or quality or tone to our economic and social development that makes it worthwhile in terms of values and welfare. Therefore, both for accelerating economic and social growth, for speeding up economic and social development, for improving the quality of the society which we are trying to create,

it is essential to have adult education and adult literacy. I would, therefore, put in the forefront of any programme for economic and social development, a programme of adult education and adult literacy.

The last point that I want to deal with is the concept of adult education and educational planning. I feel that essentially adult education should be distinguished from all types of education in so far as adult education is much more functional, much more related to economic and social development than education proper. Education proper extends from the age of 5 or 6 to at least the age of 14 to the bulk of our people, to the age of 16 to a very large number, and to a fairly large number up to the age of 21 or 22. As you know, we have got about 1.6 million students in colleges and universities for higher education in this country, which is a very large number compared in absolute figures to almost any country in the world with the exception of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. And by the time we come to the end of the Fourth Plan, the number of persons going in for higher education is expected to be something like 2.3 million persons. Therefore, education is something which goes on for a long number of years and it has got a mixed motivation. Education proper is not only functional, and it is difficult to accept the proposition that education is solely and wholly intended for economic development or is solely and wholly functional. But adult education is in a different category. Adult education does not extend for so many years. This is the first important functional differentiation. Adult education may be for three months, four months, six months. Education involves years, buildings, teachers, etc. These are the three constituents of education proper. There must be buildings, there must be teachers, and the number of years is long. But



that is not so in the case of adult education. In the case of adult education, we probably require no new buildings, the number of years involved is small and therefore the time taken by the teacher for adult education is also not very long. It has, however, to be accepted that the adult does not complete his education just with the training that he gets in literacy. I like Acharya Vinoba Bhave's view on education, namely, that it should be such that it leads to freedom from the teacher. There is a lot of sense in that dictum. A student who is dependent on the teacher is not really well-educated; and he is not a good teacher who constantly makes his student more and more dependent on himself. That teacher is good who gives enough knowledge and excites enough interest in the student to make the person independent of the teacher and enables him to get on his own and learn more for himself and expand his knowledge. Now, while this is true even of education as such, it is very very much true of adult education. The significant hallmark of adult education is that, within a very short period of time, we implant in the adult the capacity to be free of the teacher and at the same time to pursue his own literacy for the purpose of expanding his own knowledge. In other words, the adult becomes his own educator, the adult becomes his own teacher. The sooner an adult performs for himself the function the teacher performs, the more successful is the adult education.

The second thing you have got to remember when we talk of adult education and educational planning, is that essentially adult education has to be functional and very much more. I feel Basic education should not have been thrust on young children of five, six or seven, but it really should have been meant for adults. It is the adult who knows that education for him has got to be linked up

much more with life, environment, economic activity, social activity, development, and planning, than in the case of the child. There is a vast difference between the type of education that the adult requires and the type of education that the child requires. The former has got to be much more functional, basic, related to activity and development, development-oriented, function-oriented, and work-oriented. Only then will the adult be interested. He is more interested in finding out something which will enable him either to get a better understanding of the working of his own particular occupation, increase his food production, stop insects from destroying crops, in making his children behave better, getting more value from what he is actually using. He may be an illiterate but his mind is grown up and his interests are already cultivated. We are not writing on a blank slate when we are dealing with an adult.

It is my feeling, therefore, that adult education is something which has got to be handled by a number of Ministries, as it involves agriculture, industry, community development, health, local self-government, etc. I do not think it is something which wholly forms a part of education as defined in the country for ministerial and departmental classification. It is my tentative thinking that adult education is a subject that has got to be handled by a combination of Ministries rather than by a single Ministry. I have a feeling that Basic Education failed, maybe, because it was put in the Ministry of Education since Basic education involves something much more than ordinary education. If you ask me to run a Basic school, I would not know what to do about it, whereas I can run other kinds of things where one mainly relies on the traditional methods of teaching. But the moment we come to something which embraces many aspects of life more

than the merely educational, teaching becomes rather difficult. I have the fear, therefore, that adult education for economic development may also fail, if it were made one of the normal and routine functions of the Ministry of Education either at the Centre or in the States and entrusted to them exclusively. I would, therefore, advance the tentative but definite opinion that adult education for the promotion of social and economic development has got to be handled by a number of departments of the Government. Now, if something has got to be handled by a number of departments of the Government, one could think of Planning Commission at the Centre. But Planning Commission is not the implementing or executive body. When adult literacy is equivalent to primary schools for adults, it should be in the Ministry of Education. But when we think of adult education, as I do, as something which is complete in itself, is terminal and not a point of entry, which has to be linked up with economic and social development and intended to create in the adult self-reliance, the capacity to expand his knowledge and use his literacy for the purpose of social and economic development, I suggest that the organisation for this purpose should be an independent organisation. I wonder whether it may not be worthwhile to constitute an autonomous body for adult education for social and economic development as we have got an autonomous body for university education like the University Grants Commission or as we have got an autonomous body for social welfare like the Central Social Welfare Board, with funds placed at its disposal which could then draw upon all the different Government departments. If you read the report on Gram Shikshan Mohim prepared by my officers, you will find that it has succeeded where all the departments of the Government have been brought together. You will find the revenue department, the local self-government

department, the health department and other departments coming together. You will find that the Gram Shiksha Movement, which is the adult literacy movement initiated in Maharashtra, has succeeded much more than elsewhere because of this collaboration between various departments. It may be worthwhile, therefore, to have a Central Adult Education Board, which would be autonomous, statutory, and given the functions of liquidating illiteracy and promoting the use of literacy for social and economic development. An autonomous statutory board to whom funds will be given will bring in all the departments which could then have State boards and which will have the big function of not only doing away with adult illiteracy but also seeing that literacy, both existing and to be newly created, is used for the purposes of promotion of social and economic development.

One last word, and I have done. Literacy, as I have already said, is not the word I like very much, excepting as a subsidiary or a supporting word, because literacy, unless used, is worse than useless because it gives one the illusion of being able to get an entry into the houses of knowledge. It is the utilisation of literacy which ought to be the most important function of adult education. This is what I have been stressing in the Planning Commission. I have gone all out to give a much more important role to the utilisation of literacy than merely to the teaching of literacy to people. Utilisation of literacy really means enormous production programmes of books and journals, multiplication of libraries, mobile libraries, museums and all the other various ways and means by which the literacy will be used for the purpose of social and economic development and also for cultural development. If we talk of literacy at all, it should be in terms of utilisation of literacy and not merely of the retention



of literacy. I do not like the word 'retention' of literacy. Retention is not enough. Literacy is something which you use. You have to use it, otherwise there is no point in having it. Therefore, I would say that utilisation of literacy is necessary for the purpose of promotion of social and economic development.

I am so glad that UNESCO is participating in this seminar. I had the privilege of a discussion, a very brief discussion, both with Mr. Bowers and Prof. Thomas and I think a great deal can be done if a world body like UNESCO—which I have always regarded conceptually as the most superior of all international bodies, just as I regard the teacher as conceptually the most superior of all persons—can help to stimulate this activity in our country. UNESCO can do a great deal to help in this movement for adult education for the purpose of social and economic development—not so much by giving us teachers, as by giving us tools, equipment and the experience of other parts of the world. We would very much value and appreciate the assistance of UNESCO also in terms of its moral support. That is very important because it strengthens us if we feel what we are doing is also something which is believed in and supported by a great world body like UNESCO. But over and above that we would appreciate any assistance we could get from them in regard to the utilisation of literacy programme, that is, in regard to book production, paper, illustration plates, books, charts, equipment for museums, maps—all the various things that are important from the point of view of utilisation of literacy for social and economic development. I think UNESCO can do a great deal and I hope that in this task which we will be undertaking for adult education for the promotion of social and economic development in this country, we will also get not only the moral but also the material support of UNESCO.

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS  
TO THE FIFTEENTH  
ALL INDIA LIBRARY CONFERENCE**

MYSORE JUNE 1965

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I FEEL deeply honoured at having been invited to preside over this distinguished conference of professional librarians. Your Association has been serving the country now for over 30 years in one of the most significant fields of education and knowledge; and such place as the library movement occupies in the educational, social, and cultural development in our country is almost entirely due to the enthusiasm and dedicated work of your organisation and its members. I have every hope that, with your continued co-operation and hard work as also with my own personal enthusiasm born out of a deep conviction of the crucial place of the library in both formal and non-formal education, we will be able to make significant progress during the Fourth Plan in regard to the

TWENTY-NINE

library movement and the expansion, betterment, and more effective utilisation of libraries in both rural and urban areas and in both academic and public institutions.

It is not necessary for me to tell you, librarians, what an important place the library holds in any developing society. Formal education with its lectures and seminars fails of its major purpose when it is not accompanied by a good and up-to-date library, a competent and interested librarian, and an academic climate that results in extensive and even indiscriminating utilisation of its services. Children's libraries form one of the essential ingredients for the release of the child's intellectual curiosity and the foundation for building into the adult of tomorrow the habit of reading and thereby equipping him with the key to the ever expanding frontiers of knowledge. Public libraries are an indispensable condition for the utilisation of literacy and the intelligent participation by the people in the economic and political development of the country. In fact, libraries constitute as important a sector of education as either elementary or secondary or university or technical or adult education; and any educational planning that fails to recognise the place of libraries would be missing one of the basic tiers of the educational structure.

I am afraid that our educational planning so far has not given adequate attention to libraries. As far as formal education including training and research are concerned, libraries are considered to be part of the entire programme and it is left to the authorities concerned to decide on what place they should give either to libraries or librarians in their outlays. This has not worked too badly as far as the universities and technical and professional institutions are concerned, though even here a considerable measure of credit is due to the University

Grants Commission and the special assistance they have given by way of assistance for buildings, books and upgrading of library personnel. Even then, the position is not satisfactory as far as many of the mofussil colleges are concerned. In fact, I think it is time that a special review was made of the library budget in the 1800 colleges that we have got in the country as also of their existing stock of books and journals as also of their library building, reading rooms, and trained personnel. This is particularly important in our country, where students are too poor to be able to buy books, especially in science and the professional subjects. I wish your Association would take up this subject and make a quick survey of the existing position in Indian colleges in regard to their libraries. If they do, I can assure them, the Planning Commission, in turn, will see to it that some remedial measures are taken in the Fourth Plan period and that a significant improvement is effected in our college libraries.

The position regarding libraries, however, is much worse in the case of secondary schools, of which we have now 22,000 in the country. When we remember that the bulk of our educated people in India are drawn from those who have only had a high school education, the damage that this is causing to the social, political, and economic development of our country assumes massive dimensions. Far too many high schools in the country have libraries which consist only of 4 or 5 cupboards, there are hardly any journals except those received from foreign publicity agencies, and reading rooms of the right size and facilities are conspicuous by their absence, and, I may add, the same is the case with trained library personnel without whom it is not possible to extend the habit of regular and discriminating reading among the school-going population. We are making provision in the Fourth Plan for the



improvement of quality in secondary education; and one of the important ways of doing this is to see that high schools have better libraries and librarians than they have now. If this is to be implemented, I have no doubt that a separate section should be set up in the State Directorates of Public Instruction to look after library interests in the schools under their jurisdiction. It may even be necessary to set up an agency in each State for the bulk purchase of books and journals and their organised distribution among schools. In this connection, I may add that we are hoping to introduce a phased programme in the Fourth Plan under which high schools in the country will be able to supplement their books with a collection of musical records, prints, and statues which will give students an integrated view of our composite Indian culture and thereby not only promote national integration but also help them to develop the aesthetic side of their personalities. Altogether, I can say with confidence that we hope to make a significant dent during the Fourth Plan on the lacunae that now exist in our schools in their library and other cultural and functional equipment.

Libraries also have a place in elementary schools including both primary and middle schools. The students these schools cater for number many crores; and a vast majority of them are not likely, for the time being at any rate, to have education beyond the elementary stage. It is imperative therefore that they too should have reading material that will give permanence to their literacy and also enable them to use it later on for purpose relevant to their economic development. At the same time, it is a moot point whether we should have separate libraries for these elementary schools when simultaneously we also want public libraries for the literates and neo-literates among the adult population. My own personal opinion is that these should

be attached to every elementary school—if this cannot all be done at the same time, it can be done in stages—a public library-cum-reading room which will serve both the children and the adults in the village. Where this is not possible, the school could have a small library of its own, while the needs of the adults could be catered for by a system of mobile libraries. What is really important is to see that the rural population—both the children of elementary schools and the working adults—have the facilities for reading materials which will enable them to function more effectively whether as students or persons engaged in productive activity. I must add that my conception of rural libraries does not only include books and journals, it must also include audio-visual aids, even if these are available only at periodic intervals and not on a continuous basis in every Indian village. How far we will be able to achieve this during the Fourth Plan is more than I can say; but we are making some financial provision for this in the Fourth Plan outlay on education and I am hopeful of some significant change being brought about in our rural areas by way of facilities for the exercise and utilisation of literacy.

This takes me on to the whole subject of adult education and public libraries. As you are aware, the Fourth Plan places considerable emphasis on adult literacy and adult education programmes. In fact, we are making a provision of Rs. 74 crore for this purpose. Of this amount, a substantial sum of the order of more than Rs. 29 crore is being earmarked for public libraries, especially in the rural areas. The bulk of this is meant for district central libraries, block libraries, and village libraries, while a part is also meant for urban libraries. These libraries are not intended merely or even largely for housing books on fiction or literature; they have to play a distinctive functional role in

the development of education and of skills in the rural and small town population of India. These public libraries should not only supplement the library facilities available for students in their educational institutions but also be linked up with the needs of those who are taking up correspondence courses, part-time courses and sandwich courses. They should also cater to the functional and professional requirements of the working adults in these areas. You will see therefore that, in my scheme of things, public libraries occupy an important and integral place in the educational structure of the country, especially in the implementation of its role in economic and social development. To put this into effect, we need to establish public libraries where they do not exist now; and strengthen and expand them where they already exist. How massive a programme this involves can easily be seen when we realise that today only 63 per cent of the districts, 27 per cent of the blocks and 5 per cent of the villages, have public libraries. That the place given even to these libraries is only marginal is seen from the fact that the expenditure *per capita* on public libraries came to only 2.9 paise in 1963-64, inter-State variation being between 0.3 paise *per capita* in Uttar Pradesh and 9.3 paise *per capita* in West Bengal. The inadequacy of our public library facilities is further highlighted by the fact that for every thousand persons in the country, only one is registered as a borrower in a public library and that for every one thousand persons only 16 books are borrowed in a year. It is also a fact that even of the pitifully small number of books borrowed only a small proportion consists of books that have a functional or developmental or even an educational significance. All this is an obviously unsatisfactory situation; but I hope there will be a significant improvement during the Fourth Plan in the provision of Rs. 29 crore which is intended exclusively for public libraries. If so this amount is added a step up in public contributions, whether

voluntarily or by law, the situation will record a further improvement.

This leads me naturally to the subject of library cess, library legislation, and public participation in the library movement. Unless the local community gets involved not only by way of receipt but also by way of contribution in the financing and functioning of public libraries, the movement cannot expand to the extent necessary nor to that degree of effective utilisation without which mere expansion is not of much functional utility. Whether a library cess is essential or not is a question on which I find there are differences of opinion among your professional experts. But what is important is that funds are made available, whether by way of an earmarked cess or through a specific head in the revenue budgets of the panchayati raj institutions being a matter of detail that can be settled according to local circumstances. But library legislation for the establishment and orderly functioning of a network of public libraries is, in any case, an essential condition for the growth of the public library movement. It is a matter of great regret that in spite of the time and thought that has been devoted to this subject, there are still so many States in India which do not have legislation for public libraries. With the massive programme that the Fourth Plan contemplates for the development of public libraries and especially their extension to the rural areas, it is imperative that all the States in India should forthwith go in for enactment of such legislation. The model Act prepared by the Ministry of Education and circulated among the State Governments need not be taken as a constraint on any modifications they may have in mind in the light of their own experience and local circumstances. What is required is the enactment of State legislation for the establishment, maintenance and development of public



libraries, even if its clauses vary from those contained in the Model Public Libraries Bill and even if it does not provide for the levy of a special library cess. I propose to take up this question personally with the State Ministers of Education by sending them copies of the Model Bill together with the proceedings of your last conference where this was discussed in detail and any additional comments. I may have on the subject with the request that they may take steps for the enactment of necessary legislation as a pre-condition for the launching of the massive programme for public libraries that has been included in the Fourth Plan.

It is hardly necessary for me to dilate on the importance of book production in the context of the proposed development of public libraries during the Fourth Plan. It is not enough to have either legislation or even budgetary provisions. It is equally important to have the books on which the money can be spent. This has now acquired added significance in view of the recent decision of the Congress Working Committee and the Chief Ministers on the language problem. Indian languages are now becoming the official languages of the State Governments; they already constitute the media of instruction in schools and are expected in due course also to become media in universities. and other institutions of higher learning. Hindi has become the official language of the Central Government with English as an additional official language. The Fourth Plan period therefore is going to see a significant development in Indian languages. The Fourth Plan had already included a substantial provision for book production in Indian languages to the tune of nearly Rs. 20 crore; and it is not unlikely that this may be increased following the recent decision on the language problem. The massive programme we are including in the Fourth Plan for public

libraries is therefore accompanied by a book production programme which should ensure the success of the former.

In addition to legislation, finance, and book production, the programme also requires for its success the necessary trained personnel as also the administrative and coordinating organisation for supply, distribution, and utilisation. The Model Bill for Public Libraries provides for such an organisation. It would be necessary to supplement it by making inspection of school and college libraries as part of the functions of the proposed directorate or sub-directorate of libraries and strengthening it suitably in terms of personnel. Arrangements will also have to be made for the training programmes needed to produce the library personnel required at various levels. It would also be useful to give a more important place than hitherto to the elements of library science and promotion of the library habit in the normal teacher-training programmes for both elementary and secondary schools. In this training programme for library personnel, there is room not only for universities but also for professional organisations like yours both at the national and at the State levels. Training at the State levels is particularly important because of the new emphasis we are placing on Indian languages and the large share that books in Indian languages are expected to occupy in our expanded programme for public libraries.

You will see from this brief account that library development has been given a more important place in the Fourth Plan than in any or all of the previous three Plans taken together. Of course many details remain to be worked out and there has to be a detailed discussion with the State Governments on individual programmes. But libraries have now come into their own in our educational planning. As Andre Maurois has remarked: "Nothing

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is more important for mankind than to bring within the reach of all these means of broadening our horizons, escaping from ourselves and making discoveries which literally transform life and make the individual a more valuable member of society. And the only way to do this is through public libraries". Libraries are not only necessary for individual growth but also for the growth of the nation. They serve the mother eager to feed and train her children properly. They serve the children in acquiring intellectual curiosity and give them the means to satisfy it. They serve the student in his education and help him to widen his acquaintance with the frontiers of knowledge and in developing his skills for the promotion of social and economic growth. They serve the farmer and the artisan to pick up and use better techniques and more suitable materials for improving his productivity. And they serve the professional elite to keep abreast of the various developments in their special fields. Above all, for us in the developing societies, libraries constitute an inescapable instrument for growth and economic progress. I am glad therefore that it is being found possible to include library development in a large and more meaningful way in our programmes for development during the Fourth Plan period.

**CONCLUDING ADDRESS  
TO THE CONFERENCE  
ON THE ROLE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY IN  
ADULT EDUCATION**

**BHOPAL JULY 1965**

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**I** AM grateful to my respected friend and senior colleague, Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, for having invited me to this Conference of Indian Universities on Their Role in Adult Education. From my early days as a young college lecturer in Bombay in 1930, I have been a profound believer in the obligation that universities and their members have for the imparting of knowledge not only to their own students but also to the vast world outside which seeks for knowledge and is unable to obtain it on its own. That was why I organised in Bombay a small group of college and university lecturers who gave short

courses of ten lectures each in different disciplines for adult citizens who registered themselves for these courses and paid a token registration fee of one rupee each. Then, when I became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi in 1957, I coined the slogan that universities must not only impart knowledge to those who come to its doors but also take knowledge to those outside who could not come seeking to its doors. That was why I organised in 1958 a whole programme of sets of lectures in different disciplines to be delivered by college and university lecturers in different parts of the city. This extra-mural work was supported by the then Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh; and it continues to form one of the many constructive activities of the University of Delhi.

Today my thinking on the subject has advanced further. I now believe that our universities have a more positive and much larger role to play in the field of adult education than contemplated so far, especially in the context of our developing economy and our desire for the establishment of a democratic and socialist society. And I believe that in the discharge of this role, it is not only the teachers but also the students who have a part to play. Before I proceed to outline my ideas on this expanded role of universities in adult education, it would be useful to give a brief review of the current situation regarding the state of knowledge among the adult population of our country.

The 1961 census figures, and this is after ten years of planning, reveal a rather dismal picture for a country that regards itself as having a high place among the civilised, even if not economically better-off, nations of the world. The over-all literacy percentage was only 24, the corresponding figure for the female population

being less than 13. The position was much worse for the rural population, their over-all literacy percentage being 19, and that for their female population being 8.6. Even among the urban population, over-all literacy was only 47 per cent, and female literacy 34.4 per cent.

When the literacy figures are analysed from the point of view of the educational qualifications they represent, it is found that the picture is even more unsatisfactory. Of the 105.4 million literates in the country, no less than 66.4 million or 63 per cent can just read and write and have not passed even the primary-level examination. 30.9 million have passed the primary or junior Basic examinations, of whom 12.8 million are urbanites, and the remaining 18.1 million belong to rural areas. 8.1 million have passed the matriculation or higher examinations, of whom 5.6 million are urbanites and 2.5 million residents in rural areas.

I do not see how those of us who belong to the university educated class can feel so proud of ourselves or of our universities when we are surrounded by this vast area of illiteracy and ignorance. I agree that this is a problem that only the State can tackle in a massive way; and that in turn depends upon the priorities that our planners attach to adult literacy and education and even more upon the extent to which these priorities are accepted and implemented by our State Governments. The Planning Commission has sought to give an important place to adult literacy and adult education in the Fourth Plan and I am hopeful not only of its acceptance by the State Governments but also of its implementation. The Planning Commission's thinking on the subject, however, is based upon the eliciting of public cooperation on a vast scale and a massive harnessing of voluntary workers,



especially in regard to the liquidation of illiteracy. The educated have a responsibility towards those who are not; and this responsibility does not simply mean the former giving guidance to the latter, but much more, the enabling of the latter to give themselves their own guidance. In other words, the educated have to educate the uneducated; and the literate have to make illiterate the literate. Unless this fundamental social responsibility is recognised, accepted, and given effect to, I see no hope of either the liquidation of illiteracy in India or of the universal education of the adults in the things that matter for economic or political or social or cultural development. As those who occupy the highest rung of the educational structure, our universities have a crucial role to play in this process. Hence my wholehearted and hopeful welcome to this attempt by our universities to examine their role in adult education.

I would like to classify the university's role in adult education under the following four heads:

- (1) Adult literacy and education for neo-literates;
- (2) Education for the adults having had education at various levels and desirous of proceeding further without having to attend full-time courses of instruction or join as full-time students;
- (3) Adult education for those who do not want to acquire university degrees or certificates or equivalent formal qualifications but are anxious to acquire knowledge in various fields such as science, technology, social studies, and the humanities; and
- (4) Research, training, and publications.

In the current context of our adult illiteracy, I attach the highest importance to the first category. If there is one field more than another for which we require a crash programme and a nation-wide mass campaign, it is that of the liquidation of adult illiteracy. We must see that within the Fourth Plan period, all persons, both males and females, rural and urban, between the ages of 15 and 40 acquire both literacy and the facilities for the utilisation of this literacy. For this purpose, we require a vast army of voluntary workers who must first be given a little preparatory training. These workers can be drawn from the 8 million, now nearer 10 million, educated people we already have, whose academic qualifications are matriculation and above, the 1.3 million students who are now studying in our 1800 colleges and 62 universities, and also some among the vast number of students who are now studying in the 22,000 high schools in the country. The students can use their summer vacations and impart literacy to the adults in towns or villages, as the case may be, depending upon where they spend their vacations. The educated adults can spend some of their evenings at a stretch for the same purpose. Practically every village and certainly all towns in India have at least a few students or educated adults who can be drawn into this vast corps of literacy workers. The whole campaign has to be organised on a village or mohalla or chawl or factory or office basis and sometimes even on the basis of individual households where it is not possible to get out the adults for acquiring literacy. A great deal of detailed and painstaking staff work will be required as also books, teaching equipment, and funds for sundry expenses. It would be in the fitness of things if colleges and universities were to take a lead in this matter, establish adult literacy sections serviced by staff and students on a voluntary basis; and undertake a pilot campaign during the ensuing summer vacation to discover—

and in detail—the needs, problems and difficulties in the way of the spread of literacy on this basis. With the experience gained and a careful evaluation of the same, it would be possible to work out the details of a national campaign which can then be put through during the remaining four years of the Fourth Plan period. The programme will of course have to be accompanied by the production of a vast number of books and other literature in Indian languages having functional utility and specially designed for neo-literates along with a nation-wide net-work of village, town, and mobile libraries for bringing the books within the reach of the literates, both old and new, and thus enabling them to utilise their literacy for purposes of their all-round social, economic and cultural development. I am glad to state that the Planning Commission is making a substantial provision for both these purposes in the Fourth Plan; all that is required is the vast army of voluntary literacy workers who will both be willing and able to make use of these facilities in the proposed national campaign for the liquidation of adult literacy.

The second category I have mentioned, namely, non-formal education for the adult with some education who desires to improve his educational qualification, falls directly within the sphere of the universities and their colleges. The academic technology to be used for this purpose consists of part-time courses, sandwich courses, and correspondence courses. Of these, we already have experience of part-time colleges and we hope that more of these will be established during the Fourth Plan period. It is a pity however that we have so few of evening and night high schools in the country. If more of these could be established, then, together with evening colleges and polytechnics, it should be possible to cater for the

educational requirements of employed or otherwise occupied adults in all the places where such evening colleges and high schools exist or can be brought into existence. Here is a field, especially in terms of post-matric education, where the universities could take the lead. If an educational survey is conducted in different parts of the country of the felt needs for such non-formal education, the kind of education required and the localities most convenient to those who need this education, then it should be possible to draw up a phased programme for this purpose. The only caution I would like to introduce is the imperative need for seeing that the quality of instruction offered in these non-formal educational institutions is in no way inferior to that which is available in the full-time day colleges and university departments. I wonder why it should not also be possible for many of us who may be engaged in non-teaching occupations but have the necessary academic qualifications and, even more, the requisite emotional interest, to do some part-time teaching in these institutions. Even as I am saying this, the thought passes my mind that perhaps a pilot project could be started in New Delhi for an evening workers' college specially intended for Central Government employees and employed school teachers, provided enough autonomy and freedom for academic experimentation is given to such an institution by the university authorities. If such freedom is not possible because of university regulations, which also have their place in the university world, then it may even be worthwhile starting such an institution purely as an educational experiment and without the supporting umbrella of a university, at least for such time as is necessary to make it acceptable for recognition by employing authorities, if not also by the university. Apart from this possibly crazy idea of mine, I would commend to my colleagues in this conference the need for their taking a lead in respect of



par-time colleges and institutions as part of their role in adult education.

For those who are not able to take up such part-time courses either because of distance or non-availability, correspondence courses constitute the obvious solution. Though correspondence courses have been in existence for over fifty years in many of the developed countries and the Soviet Union has made it one of the major features of its educational system, they are comparatively new in India. To the Delhi University must go the credit of having successfully pioneered this educational technique. Now both the Education Ministry and the Planning Commission have given it a big place in their educational programmes for the Fourth Plan period. Correspondence courses combined with good and easily accessible libraries and well-designed personal contact programmes provide a satisfactory solution not only to the problem of non-formal but degree-oriented adult education but also to that of making education available to the many young men and women who do not get admission to institutions of formal education. The successful implementation of the programme however depends largely upon the interest that universities take in it and the work they do for giving it content and direction. While the correspondence courses have to be designed and operated by the universities or other specialised institutions of higher education, I believe that the personal contact programme should largely be operated by colleges and other similar institutions because of the numbers involved and the greater ease with which they can solve the problem of distance and accommodation for the vast numbers of non-metropolitan entrants to these courses. I am very glad that this conference has devoted one whole session to this subject; and I trust that their deliberations will smoothen the way

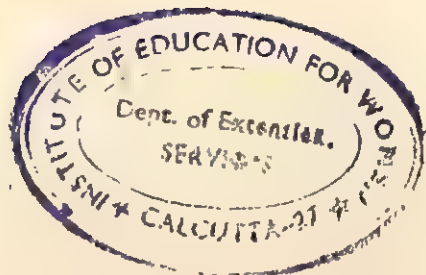
for the undertaking of this programme on a large scale during the Fourth Plan period.

The third category to which I have referred is adult education for those who seek knowledge but are not interested in acquiring any degree or diploma. Such seekers of knowledge are to be found not only in the metropolitan towns but also in the district and taluka towns, block headquarters, and even in the rural areas. Courses of lectures, follow-up programmes in libraries, radio talks, audio-visuals aids—all these have their place in this programme of adult education. Universities and colleges have a major role to play in this matter, and indeed a beginning in this direction has already been made by several universities in India. What is required is expansion and systematisation and a much more extensive coverage in territorial terms than has been the case so far.

The fourth and last category in the role of universities in adult education to which I would refer is research, training, and publications. A great deal of research and evaluation work is necessary in regard to teaching and follow-up methods in adult literacy and adult education. Training has also to be imparted to those who are to function as teachers in this field. Equally important is the need for publications which would both interest and benefit the adult, especially the neo-literates and the educated adults who seek extension of their knowledge. The universities are the institutions most fitted to tackle this complicated but vital problem of research, training and publication. What they need for the purpose are strong university departments of pedagogy, strong departments of extra-mural studies, strong departments of part-time college and correspondence courses, and above all, an undertaking and dedicated recognition of the responsibility of universities

and their members towards satisfying the educational needs of those who are unable to go in for formal education. I have no doubt about the ability of our universities to rise to this social and moral challenge nor about the significant role they are going to play in adult education in India.

I would like to conclude with a reference to the organisational implications of the role we are seeking to give to our universities in adult education. Without a specific organisation charged with the responsibility for this programme in each university, and indeed in every college, and accountable for success or failure in its implementation, there can be no massive programme of adult education. A comprehensive and adequately staffed department of adult education, including different sections for literacy and neo-literates, non-formal but degree-oriented adult education, education for educated adults seeking knowledge but not formal degrees or diplomas, research, training and publication, needs to be established in every university; and it may even be necessary to place at its head a Director who will have the status of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. I have no doubt that such a programme will receive the sympathetic and concrete aid of the University Grants Commission and its distinguished Chairman, Prof. D. S. Kothari, who I know, shares with me this conviction of the special responsibility that universities have for the promotion of adult education. For my part, as Member-in-Charge of Education in the Planning Commission, I am prepared to go all out to do whatever I can to assist and strengthen this programme. It is now up to you, gentlemen to play your part in seeing that your universities do play a major role in the promotion and expansion of adult education in India.



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## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON LIQUIDATION OF ILLITERACY**

POONA NOVEMBER 1965

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I AM grateful to my friend and colleague, the Education Minister of Maharashtra State, for having agreed to inaugurate this conference and to welcome the guests. Looking to the number of persons who are present and who will be taking part in the deliberations of this National Seminar, which has been organised by the Planning Commission and the Maharashtra Government jointly for the purpose of focusing attention on the problems confronting the country on undertaking a comprehensive programme of adult education during the Fourth Plan, it might be called a conference.

Some persons may wonder why we should have called this Seminar at a time like this when all our thoughts are occupied with the problems of defence and other



development problems associated with it. We thought over this but nevertheless thought it fit to convene this Seminar because of our basic belief that defence and development are both integrally inter-related with adult literacy and adult education. It is indeed difficult for a country, which consists of persons who are not able to communicate with each other in terms either of the present or in terms of the values coming down to them from the past, especially when communication is only oral and restricted to very narrow sub-regions to build up emotional integration in terms of its constituent parts. Programmes of adult education are, therefore, especially relevant in the rural areas where there is not the same kind of intensive knowledge or the same kind of intelligent interest in national problems, even more so, when the bulk of the population is not literate as in urban areas. Obviously, in the rural areas, which represents the bulk of the country and where more than 80 per cent population live and who are the real people of India, if we want to develop a feeling of what we call an intelligent and purposive nationalism—not a chauvinistic nationalism—feelings of emotional integration, understanding of what India is and what its different parts stand for, how they are linked together spatially and in terms of time, it is impossible to do it merely by organising a series of lectures which all the villagers will attend. Literacy is the most important instrument for communication and, therefore, from the point of view of defence itself, it is essential that our adults in the rural areas—and women more than men—should be furnished with the equipment which will enable them to understand what is happening in the country and to develop feelings of integration, and, as I said, purposive and intelligent nationalism.

When we are discussing the relevance of adult education in a period of national emergency, we must remember

that men who are mobilised for service in the armed forces have to be supported by people who live behind the front. Many of the recruits in the armed forces come from the rural areas. Therefore, it is important that the rural areas should be well-informed on the whole subject of what the fighting is all about. This cannot be done merely by word of mouth; it has got to be done through written communication, through posters, through pamphlets or through other written materials. And, if the written material is to be understood, it cannot be done without literacy. We must also remember that in the present context, the country has to go all out to develop economic self-reliance and mobilise all its economic resources for meeting its consumption requirements. For this purpose, maximum utilisation of the manpower resources of this country can be a major instrument. One lesson we have learnt in the last few months is that we have not been making enough use of our manpower in this country. Our economic development and our plans and our programmes have been far too much oriented to dependence on foreign machinery and foreign imports of various kinds. While it is important that we must industrialise, mechanise, and go in for sophisticated and modern ways of production, nevertheless, the fact remains that, from the point of view of self-reliance—till such time as we are in a position ourselves to make all the sophisticated machinery and methods of production that we require—we have a very big place for the utilisation of manpower as such. This means in turn the imparting of skills, ability and a capacity for disciplined and cooperative work.

The proportion of literates in this country to the adult population is one of the lowest in the world, not only as compared to the developed countries, but even as compared

to the under-developed countries. If we look at the literacy in China and that in India, I must confess with a great sense of shame that the Chinese have made a much greater advance in the matter of literacy than what we have been able to do in this country. The New Chinese Government came into existence somewhere about 1949; we came into existence as an independent nation in 1947. So for all practical purposes, what we may call New China and New India more or less started at about the same time. And yet our literacy performance does not compare well with the Chinese achievement. To some extent, it is a reflection on the priorities we attach in this country in our educational planning and educational thinking. We stipulated in our Constitution that every body below the age of 14 must get compulsory and free elementary education. But we did not realise that the education of an adult is as important as the education of the child. Now take another example. Indonesia undertook a vast programme of adult literacy almost immediately after she established for independence. Every village, which had achieved complete literacy proclaimed it by putting up a special flag and by 1962, they had achieved literacy to the tune of 59 to 60 per cent. The major countries—the four major countries of Asian region—started about the same time. We share with Pakistan the unique distinction, if at all a distinction, of having about the same record of literacy while when compared to China and Indonesia, we are very much worse. As far as literacy is concerned—let alone the question of adult education—this great nation of ours occupies a very low place in the world. It is bad enough to occupy a low place as far as the per capita national income is concerned. But I think it is disgraceful to do so in terms of adult literacy and adult education. It is my total conviction that there can be no comprehensive

or genuine or rapid social, cultural, economic or political advance, unless there is adult literacy and adult education which will at least be of the order of 85, 90 or 95 per cent of the adult population in the country. Compared to that, the kind of position in which we find ourselves after 18 years of independence is something which is a cause for great dissatisfaction.

Today, we have a literate population of 106 million persons in the country. If we take the total illiterate population, it is 253 million persons. By 1971, if the present pace of progress continues, as revealed by the first 15 years of our planning, and if the rate of literacy goes up from 24 per cent in 1961 to about 35 per cent in 1971, even then the number of illiterate people would be increasing and would number about 361 million. This increase in the number of illiterate adults would be not only because of increase in population but also because of the ineffectiveness of our primary education system to achieve literacy. Even if we take only the age-group 15—44 as representing the best period of economic activity, the number of illiterates in 1961 was 131 million. Now this figure in 1971 is likely to become 151 million even if there is a rise of over 10 per cent in the literacy rates during the decade 1961 to 1971. If this progress in illiteracy is to be prevented, we have got to proceed very much faster with our adult education programmes and in a much more comprehensive way than anything done in the last 15 years. That is what is suggested in the Fourth Plan.

I think we have to get to think in terms of wiping out illiteracy completely in a matter of few years. I do not like the talk of setting a 25- or 30-year target for



bringing down illiteracy on the oft-repeated plea for proceeding slowly and adopting a selective approach. All the experts who meet either in Bangkok or in Teheran or in Paris say that we must have a selective approach and take up only those areas for literacy work where people have already been motivated and where such investment yields largest results. The investment we are talking about in the context of Gram Shikshan Mohim Movement is not an investment of the type that the experts are talking about. It is investment of the type which depends upon the national will and upon the willingness of the people—both teachers and learners—to give their time, because they feel it is something worthwhile. This country has no future if illiteracy is not wiped out in its entirety in a period of at the most ten years. And it is not impossible. We have got 106 millions of literates in this country of whom at least there are 10 millions of educated people, with matriculation qualification and above. The total number of illiterate people in this country is 151 million. If the programme is organised as a movement and on a campaign basis, it should not be impossible to wipe out this illiteracy. The reason why we have such admiration for the Gram Shikshan Movement is because it is a campaign. It is not based on a whole-time and paid bureaucracy where we appoint a Director, or a Deputy Director or a Joint Director, assistants, assistants-in-charge, so many clerks and so many chaprasis. The latter method would cost a lot of money and also take a lot of time. We can afford neither. Hence the need for a mass campaign and the mobilisation of voluntary resources. To make a person literate is not such a difficult thing. What is difficult is the follow-up that leads to education. The latter will cost money, but to be effective, it has also to be organised on a campaign basis.

It is necessary that all persons up to the age of 44 or 45 have got to be literate through a campaign basis on the lines of Gram Shikshan Mohim Movement where the people themselves play an active part. One should also mobilise college students, school students, and the teaching fraternity. If we can mobilise our resources of educated personnel, we have a large stock to draw upon. There are not many countries in the world which can claim 10 million educated persons who have passed matriculation and above. Of course, the 10 million is there because we are a very large country. But in absolute terms, they are a large number, but what we need is their being motivated for participation in the adult literacy campaign. In other words, it is not merely the motivation of the adults to become literate which is important. We need also the motivation of the educated to see that nobody remains uneducated in his vicinity, in his locality, in his district, in his State, in his country. We want a double motivation, motivating the man who is not literate to become literate and motivating the man who is literate to see that he makes other people literate. We have got to see that it is the responsibility of the educated men to see that other people also share in the education that he has. It is not impossible to stimulate this motivation and this sense of extra-personal responsibility. Why do we think that our educated people have all lost their extra-personal motivation? After all, there are still plenty of us who can remember what happened in this country before 1947 and how it was possible to mobilise large numbers of educated people for doing things just because they were motivated by the desire for attaining independence for the country. Or even today look at the motivation in the country that we had in 1962 or now in 1965. We have to link up national defence, national development and national growth with the cardinal necessity

for removing or wiping out illiteracy and making possible adult education. That will give us the needed motivation.

Literacy alone, however, is not enough. But it has to be organised on a campaign basis. Speaking for myself, I do not see why it should take more than 3 or 4 months. Some people say even 2 months will do; opinion varies from expert to expert and from person to person. In this case, it does not take anywhere more than from four to six or seven months to make a person literate. Of course, literacy is just the beginning, it does not take the adult very far. It has to be followed by adult education.

Adult literacy does not merely mean confining one's attention to the illiterate adult. Quite a number of adults are of course illiterate because they never went to school. Quite a number of others however are illiterate because they dropped out of primary schools after one or two or three years of schooling. Thus out of every 100 boys who join the first class, hardly 33 reach the fifth class, which means that the rest grow up into illiteracy as it requires 4 to 5 years of schooling to acquire and retain literacy. Adult literacy is thus linked up with improvement of the system of primary education, setting up of continuation classes for those who drop out of schools, special programmes for girls' education, etc.

As regards adult literacy proper, it would be unrealistic (and perhaps even unnecessary) to think of covering the entire adult population under literacy programmes even if some of them are aged 60 and above. In my opinion, adult literacy programmes should be primarily for those who are in the working age-group and will have some years left for work after the acquisition of literacy.

Account must also be taken of the fact that after a certain age, an adult would not normally be either inclined or even able to take to literacy and its follow-up in adult education. The age-group which is likely both to benefit the most and be most motivated would be 15—40.

The kind of literacy they need is what is described as 'functional literacy'. In other words, literacy does not merely mean ability to sign a document or reading a few pages of printed text. When we plead for adult literacy, we want it not so much as an end in itself but as an instrument of growth, comprehension, understanding, development, increased efficiency, etc. It is also necessary to concretise the content of adult literacy programmes, which will define what functional literacy is, indicate how functional literacy can be imparted, spell out the details of the kinds of aids required, including teaching equipment, the kind of persons who will do the teaching and type of training these teachers will require. We have got farmers, artisans of various kinds, agricultural labourers, various sections of society in the rural areas. Functional literacy means literacy which would enable them to function better in their own jobs and enable them to function better primarily economically, then function better socially, function better politically and function better culturally. The primary objective however is economic because we are concerned more with their economic status and their economic conditions, and they are also motivated the most by these factors.

The question of literature, books, reading materials, etc. is an important programme in adult literacy. I think this whole subject of the production of necessary literature in Indian languages is the most important part of the adult education programme. Adult literacy is something

which can be achieved by enthusiasm, by campaigning, by whipping up emotions and so on, but adult education is something much more than this. We must have literature, this literature must be in the Indian languages and it must deal with things in which the peasant, the artisan or the worker is interested and which they find useful and stimulating. This literature must be made available either at no cost or at a very nominal cost and should be available on a very extensive basis. The Maharashtra Government is currently printing 1,00,000 copies of these booklets. For the population of Maharashtra, a much large number of copies would be necessary. We must learn from the Soviet Union where the production of books is in terms of tens of millions. And it is very important that these books are properly selected and properly written. This will have to be done stage by stage. This will have to be done by experts who will have to meet specially and discuss among themselves and try out their writings on adults. It may also be necessary, as has been done by Literacy House, Lucknow, to set up training programmes for writers of books for the neo-literates. It would be useful for each State to consider this question in some detail, including the type of literature required, their functional objective, number of copies, inputs required, cost, etc. Then, of course, it is not enough merely to have these books. It is important to see that the distribution of books is effective and that books are made available to the adults regularly and in time. Obviously, we cannot present to each adult all the books we would like him to read. We have got to think in terms of libraries also and that is why the library movement has been treated as part of the adult education movement especially, in the rural and small town areas, in blocks, in villages, taluka towns, small towns, and districts. Not only should there be libraries but also there should be



provision for introducing the books to the adults. Hence we need not merely mobile libraries but also wandering libraries, who will go from place to place and introduce selected books to the literate and neo-literate adults in the rural areas. They would take the place of the traditional *Kathakars* and *Kirtankars* who used to go from place to place, collect crowds and spend five days or six days talking to them from Purana literature. They were no more than librarians who were using oral materials, not having books and they were also adult educators making oral materials available to the adults.

How should this programme be organised? Should it be done on a governmental basis with salaried personnel or is it possible to secure the participation of non-official agencies and individual workers? The Gram Shikshan Mohim Movement of Maharashtra gives the answer. This movement owes its origin to Shri B. R. Patil who was then the District Educational Officer in Satara and is now working in the Directorate of Public Instruction, Maharashtra. Shri Patil had a missionary zeal for adult literacy and when he went round with enthusiasm, he found that people reacted to his enthusiasm. His experience underlines an important social phenomenon, namely, that the more we believe, the greater is our power to make other persons believe; the more our own enthusiasm, the more infectious is the power of that enthusiasm on others. The result was the wholesale liquidation of illiteracy in a number of villages. Gram Shikshan or village literacy was followed by Gram Gaurav or the village being honoured for attaining hundred per cent literacy. The Satara experiment demonstrated clearly that there was a demand for literacy and that there could be a supply of voluntary workers to help satisfy the demand. Funds of course are important but money by itself is not going to

deliver the goods. It is the determination of the educated people consciously to accept their responsibility for those who are not educated. The responsibility of the literate for those who are not literate is almost like having the power to remove blindness from those who are blind. It should not be impossible to stimulate this sense of responsibility, if it was organised on a campaign basis with half of persons with a missionary zeal for the liquidation of illiteracy. Local bodies, zila parishads, panchayat samitis, mohalla committees, corporations, municipalities—all these bodies can be stimulated and similarly also educational institutions like colleges, high schools, teachers' training institutions, state institutes of education, primary teachers' training colleges and technical schools. It should not be impossible to launch a campaign to make the educated actually aware of the need for restoring sight to those who do not have sight—not in a literal sense, but in a metaphorical sense. The campaign of course will have to be organised and in detail.

The campaign has got two aspects. One aspect is what we may call the consumer aspect, that is, those who are illiterate must be made to feel they must become literate, while those who are literate and do not use their literacy must be made to feel they must use their literacy. In other words, the literate must create a demand for books, journals, and other reading materials so that they may use their literacy. The illiterate must want to become literate in order that they might be in a position to become educated. Now this is one aspect of the campaign. How this aspect of the campaign should be organised is a matter for social psychologists who should spell out the techniques for motivating both the illiterate and the literate adults. Once the demand is created for literacy, supply will follow.

Sometimes, of course, there is a lag but unless the demand is created the supply is not likely to materialise.

The other aspect of the campaign which is even more important is that of organising the supply. The questions which have to be answered are how people are to be trained for doing literacy work and who are the people to be trained. It is also necessary before launching on a national programme to have the necessary minimum quantum of literature, the minimum quantum of materials and other material inputs for the imparting of literacy and its follow-up in terms of adult education. The campaign has thus three aspects: first motivating the adults to become literate and then to use their literacy; second, to get the manpower which is required for satisfying this desire of the adults for becoming literate and also the continuation classes which have to follow; third to get the materials like books journals, other publications, audio-visual aids, and all the rest which will help the manpower to enable the adults to acquire literacy and utilise their literacy.

As regards the setting of targets for the eradication of illiteracy, the problem is much less formidable than the securing of universal primary education. The programme requires a massive programme for training teachers. In the case of adult literacy, we do not require such a large number of trained persons for imparting literacy. The big difference between primary education and adult literacy is that literacy itself does not require a high level of training as an adult requires much less spoon-feeding or guidance than a child does. It is therefore possible to go in for an extensive programme for adult literacy through voluntary workers drawn from school teachers, senior students, college teachers and retired workers who are educated and are living in rural areas. It is not necessary

to have a full-time paid staff even for continuation classes for the adults. Of course, in some places like tribal areas, inaccessible areas and areas where there are no educated people there will be need for full-time staff. But in other places, given the motivation, it should not be so difficult to get persons to undertake continuation classes, even though they are not full-time and paid workers. It is, therefore, possible to set a much nearer target date, say 5 or 10 years, for the complete eradication of illiteracy among adults of the age of 40 years and under. This target will get easier of fulfilment if competitive emulation is stimulated between villages and villages, blocks and blocks, districts and districts, and States and States.

The really difficult problem is going to be the follow-up of literacy which means book production, library services and supplies to rural areas. Follow-up costs, money, skills, organisation, use of scarce resources, etc. and therefore, needs to be organised in a systematic manner.

Finally, there is the problem of organisation and administration of the whole literacy programme. This has got to be much more the function of non-official agencies rather than of Government departments. Government departments, of course, are required for giving a certain amount of guidance and assistance. If grants are to be given a Government officer will need to see that the grants are properly spent, as Government is responsible to the legislature. Adult literacy programmes should be carried out therefore not by a Government department but by special organisations on which Government officials can be given seat. The organisations to be involved are the panchayat samitis, zila parishads, municipal corporations, district boards and the local civil organisations along with the local educational organisa-

tions and social welfare and social workers' organisations. Everywhere this has got to be a sort of a tripartite organisation—the local administration, the local educated community and the local social workers belonging to the voluntary agencies such as the Bharat Sevak Samaj or a City Social Education Committee or a Parent-Teachers' Association or the local Ramakrishna Mission, etc. Wherever there is an organisation which is devoted to social work, it should be brought into it because this is an ideal form of social work. In one place there will be an officer who is enthusiastic and excited; in another place it may be a college professor, in a third place, a teacher of primary school and in a fourth place, a social worker. It does not matter who takes the initiative, but it has to be taken at the local level. The organisations at the Central and State levels are intended for the purpose of propaganda, technical assistance, research, evaluation, progress reporting and getting funds. But the actual implementation of the programme of literacy has got to be done at the local level and it is at this level that co-operation has to be sought of school teachers, college teachers, college students, school students, and all the educated people in the locality. Everywhere, a committee should be set up with representatives of various organisations and then the Government will be in a position to deal with that committee, and give assistance, supply literature, etc. Therefore, while Government should play a very important part as far as organisation of libraries and library service is concerned, which has to be a State affair, it should largely be a voluntary affair as far as the organisation of the campaign for literacy is concerned although it also needs to be supported by the Government.

What is needed is a National Board or a National Council at the Central level where all problems relating

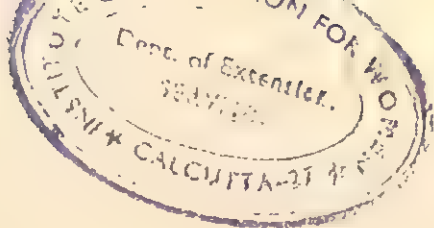


to adult literacy and adult education will be discussed, progress of work in various States will be discussed, progress of work in various States will be reviewed, results of experiments will be reported, allotment of funds will be made and decision will be taken from time to time as to how the cause of literacy will be promoted. Similar bodies will also be needed at the State level which will serve as forums for discussion, information, action, raising funds, bringing pressures and the stimulation of research. Whether these bodies should be large, representing all groups or should be small and compact bodies or whether there should be one body which is large and representative and another body which is small, compact and executive—are matters which need further discussion. What is essential, however, is the establishment of such forums at both the Central and State levels.

Finally, it must be added that while adult education and adult literacy is largely the function of non-official bodies in terms of the campaign aspect, government machinery has to be used for the other two aspects, namely, inputs such as book production, library and other services, and administrative including progress reporting and evaluation. Apart from setting up these boards at the Centre and in the States, each State Government must have a small administrative unit for looking after adult education and adult literacy within its area. Whether it should be a unit which will be a separate but a subordinate office of the Directorate of Public Instruction or be a part of the office of the Directorate of Public Instruction is again a matter of detail. The essential thing is that there should be an identifiable and accountable person who could be responsible for the entire programme of adult literacy in the State. He should be accountable, he should be responsible and he should be in a position to



give all the facts. I would rather have at the Centre the Board with an administrative unit attached to it, while in the States I would prefer the administrative unit to be in the State Government and not with the Board. If this is not acceptable, I do not mind the administrative unit being in the Central Ministry of Education. The first step is to set up these Boards. Then comes the institution of the movement on a campaign basis. This has to be followed by advance action for the production of books and organisation of library services and of continuation classes, provision of the necessary funds in the Centre and in the States, setting up of an administration organisation in the States and reliance on local bodies and local levels for the implementation of this programme. If this is done, there is no doubt that sooner than later Indian illiteracy will become a subject of the past. Then India can take its place alongside the Soviet Union and Japan as countries which have achieved 100 per cent literacy by deliberate action and within a short period.



6.

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS  
TO  
THE ROUND TABLE ON  
ADULT EDUCATION FOR  
PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY**

NFW DELHI JULY 1969

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I AM very grateful to the organisers for asking me to come and associate myself with at least the opening of the discussions you are going to have on what, I have no doubt in my mind, is a most important problem for our country, a problem that is not only of a theoretical or academic character, but one that is daily assuming more and more topical connotations. We are a parliamentary democracy in, I would say, the fullest sense of that term. I know of very few countries in the world, even which operate under the system of parliamentary democracies, where the system of parliamentary democracy is so fully implemented as far as its format is concerned. We have adult franchise, we have periodic

SIXTY-SIX

elections, we have voting by ballot, we have a cabinet responsible to Parliament for its existence and for its survival. We have the rule of law, we have civic freedoms and we have fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution justiciable in case the Executive makes, or the Legislature for the matter of that, makes an attempt on interfering with these privileges.

I think these 8 or 9 factors that I have mentioned, form a kind of a complete parliamentary whole that you cannot see repeated in many countries in the world. By and large, I would also be justified in saying, that without going into the fundamental problem of how well the parliamentary democracy has been working in securing the objectives of good government without expressing any opinion on that subject, I think I would absolutely have no hesitation in saying that as far as parliamentary government is concerned, we have been working very well indeed.

And yet, as we all know, there is a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the people of this country on the working of Government. I would not say that the dissatisfaction is on the working of Government, because it is parliamentary in character. That may be so or that may not be so. But what I think cannot be disputed is that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the minds of people with Government in general—whether it is the Central Government or the State Government or local governments, or the working of the various arms and wings of governmental administration—an extent of dissatisfaction which should not exist in a parliamentary system. Because the essence of a parliamentary system is that popular satisfaction with the system of government can be secured much more effectively in a parliamentary



system of government than in a non-parliamentary system of government. There may be other philosophic reasons behind parliamentary democracy, but from the point of view of what you may call the pure preference that most people have for a parliamentary system as against a non-parliamentary system of government, the main reason is that in a parliamentary system, the people's grievances can be articulated, the people's grievances can be presented in an organised form, the people's grievances are taken notice of, the people's needs are assessed and evaluated and government operates in a manner that gives a large amount of popular satisfaction. So, evidently we have not been functioning in that manner, otherwise there should not have been all this dissatisfaction that we find all round us as far as Government is concerned.

And that is the reason why I think it is important for us to inquire into the working of parliamentary democracy in this country to find out if there is something left out, if there are some defects of omission or commission in the working of parliamentary democracy that has resulted in failing to give our people that kind of satisfaction which is normally expected from all systems of parliamentary government. There are, of course, many reasons and this is not the forum or the platform for me to go into all the various causes or factors that could be held responsible for the state of affairs I have briefly described.

As far as this forum is concerned and the seminar you are holding is concerned, it is mainly a question of to what extent is lack of education, on the part of the electorate, responsible for the non-satisfactory working of parliamentary democracy. I take it, the whole objective of this seminar, as well as the proposal for setting up some kind of an institution for the education of people,



the education of adults in parliamentary democracy, is based on the thesis that the absence of education, or the absence of adequate education, amongst the adult population on the meaning operation, implications, and working of democracy, of parliamentary democracy, is a factor that has stood in the way of our getting full satisfaction from the system of government. And it is in that context, Mr. Chairman, that I shall confine my remarks in this particular address.

To begin with, let me go on record as saying, without any ambiguity or shadow of any kind of doubt, that in my opinion, with all its defects, there can be no system of government more desirable than a system of parliamentary democracy. I think we should be extremely grateful to the Founding Fathers of our Constitution who brought into existence simultaneously with our independence, a system of government that is based on democracy. That is a very precious heritage and whatever be the difficulties, we find in operating it, whatever be the individual or group dissatisfactions that we may get from its operation, I think we should have no doubt in our minds that parliamentary democracy whether it should be presidential, parliamentary, in the sense of democracy where there is adult franchise, secret ballot, periodic elections, executive responsibility to the legislature, civil freedoms, rule of law and fundamental rights, that are justiciable of the citizen as against both the executive and the legislature is the best system that one can think of for the government of the people.

Therefore, whatever may happen, I hope none of us in this country, belong, as we may, to different political groups, or professing different ideologies, or having different kinds of political grievances, I hope none of us,

at any time will think of decrying, denying or subverting the system of parliamentary democracy. To do that will be, like the old adage: because the water is dirty in the bath tub and you want to throw it out, you not only throw out the bath water which is dirty, but you also throw out the baby which is being given a bath in the bath tub. This is, therefore, a declaration of faith in parliamentary democracy with which, Sir, I would like to start my remarks at this meeting.

Then coming down to the subject proper; I was just trying to look at the figures of adult literacy in this country. Because obviously, adult education without adult literacy is something which I do not think can work for a long time. I know you can teach adults by lecturing to them. You can teach adults by showing them films. All that is true. But nothing can take the place of literacy which enables the subject, by which I mean, the person whom you are trying to influence or trying to educate, nothing can replace the superior quality of literacy in so far as it enables you to come back again to what you have been told and reconsider it in the light of a judgment, uninfluenced with the oratory of the person or the handsomeness of the person, or the other kinds of magnetic appeal that they might possess as a political or any other kind of leader. Therefore, mere adult education, without adult literacy, to my mind, will not solve the problem of political education, and we cannot give up the objective of 100 per cent adult literacy if we want to bring about proper adult education of the country in terms of the understanding of democracy.

At the same time I agree, without any qualification, with the thesis that was propounded by my revered senior friend, Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta that literacy by itself

again is not meaningful, that adult literacy, without adult education, is incomplete. Adult education, without adult literacy, has also no foundation. The literacy is the foundation, the education is the structure that you put up on the foundation. Obviously without a foundation, the structure cannot last and without a structure, a foundation has no meaning at all. Therefore, adult literacy and adult education, both have to go hand in hand if we want to use this for the purposes of the education of the community, whether in political matters or in any other matters that concern it.

Now, in this connection, I was trying to look at the 1961 census figures of literacy by age-groups. I must say I was startled myself. I did not realise things were so bad. I had the illusion in my mind that this figure of literacy applied to the whole population and, therefore, the situation, as far as adults who are voters are concerned, must be very much better than the figures that are given of literacy of the population as a whole. To my shock, I found that if you take the population between the age-group 20 and above—I cannot say 21 and above—because the census figures do not give it by 21 and above—was 223 million and only 58 million among these were literate according to the census definition. And we know that the number of people who voted in 1962 was much more than 58 million. I am afraid, I do not now carry the exact figure in my head. I think it was something like 125 or 130 million. But anyway the number of people who voted in the 1962 elections therefore, at least half of them, were not literate. They must have put their cross on the ballot paper, going only by the election symbol of the candidates. Therefore, the percentage of literacy among the adults who voted was only 26.5 in 1962, maybe 30 now, maybe 34, maybe 35. But it is certainly not

going to be more than 40 per cent. By the widest stretch of my imagination, I doubt, when the 1971 figures come out, these literacy figures will improve by much more than, maybe, 40 per cent. Therefore, the bulk of our voters, the majority of our electorate is not literate, and obviously therefore, extension of adult literacy, mass literacy, must be a 'must' as far as our educational campaigns are concerned.

Unfortunately, I must say, this has not attracted the attention which it should have attracted. In fact, I think literacy programmes were regarded as a part of social welfare. They formed a part of the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Community Development, and when I was in the Planning Commission, as Member-in-Charge of Education, I did fight very hard for a massive programme of adult literacy in this country. Not only that, I think I provided in the draft Fourth Five-Year Plan a substantial amount of Rs. 68 crore for adult literacy and other allied programmes. Unfortunately, as it happens, all that disappeared in the transition from the Draft Plan of the old Planning Commission to the New Plan of the new Planning Commission.

And I also found to my horror when I came to the Ministry of Education and Youth Services that adult education was not part of the Ministry's function at all. It was one of the departments of the National Council of Educational Research and Training which was dealing with adult education. How on earth the NCERT whose main job was one of looking at secondary education examination reform, curricula reform, etc. etc. should also have been charged with the task of adult education—I could not follow at all. Then fortunately I found that a Review Committee had been appointed and that committee also expressed its surprise that adult education should be

part of the NCERT. I have now taken away adult education from the NCERT and brought it back to the Ministry. It is a premature, sick, absolutely unhealthy, non-nutritionated child! I do not know how to describe it in English. It has nothing in it except the idea. So it has now come, and I am trying to see what we can do to give it, at least, some kind of a minimum body. But I am afraid without some resources it is going to be very difficult to put through a programme of massive literacy in this country. Only very little can be done, I am afraid, and the line I am now taking is to ask for public cooperation to make adult literacy, extension of adult literacy, a social work programme, a social service programme, a campaign programme, to get the people who are interested, the people who are philanthropic-minded, not only in terms of money but much more in terms of time, in terms of efforts, whether we could persuade about 20 lakhs of college students, 60 or 70 lakhs of high school and higher school students above the 9th class and the literate population,—to do something to make other people literate. It is not easy. Any programme that is based on voluntary effort is extremely difficult and no programme, even based on voluntary effort, can be undertaken without a substantial expenditure of funds. At least we want some money for organisation, for literature and materials, etc. But still I do hope when I recover a little from all the numerous problems that I am facing as Minister for Education, I shall come down to the subject of adult education and adult literacy. I can assure the Chairman, who, I know, has his heart in this subject, that in my drawer which is full of many things, there is a prominent place for this particular subject; but I have not yet had the time to come down to this particular level or shelf in my drawer. All that I can tell him is that we will



try and see from the Ministry of Education what we can do to push this programme about adult literacy. But it cannot be done excepting on the basis of a national campaign. The only way in which you can solve the problem of adult literacy in this country is to take it up on a campaign basis, get the cooperation of all voluntary organisations, women's organisations, social service organisations, literate people, college students, high school students, literate people living in rural areas. We have got to make a wide extensive national campaign for the purpose of putting through a literacy programme. I am sure in the doing of this, the Ministry can expect, and am sure will receive assistance from the Indian Adult Education Association which has been the pioneer and the lone pioneer in this field, for a very long time, trying to sell to the people the idea that there should be adult literacy and adult education.

Then, Sir, I do not want to dwell more on this particular subject, excepting to say one thing more that adult literacy by itself is not enough. Literacy has to be followed up. Literacy without a follow-up is worse than useless. If literacy is given, opportunity must be provided for the utilisation of this literacy, otherwise the literacy learnt is soon forgotten. Therefore, as a kind of a follow-up of the literacy which is acquired, there must be libraries, books, literature, journals and adult education courses, etc., etc. Of course not that we are doing nothing. We are producing literature for neo-literates. We are giving prizes for writing this literature. Some States, like Maharashtra, have done first-class work as far as producing adult literature is concerned. But, on the whole, in the follow-up work also, a tremendous deal needs to be done if we want to follow up the literacy that has already been brought into existence.

One thing more, I must say, that when we talk about adult literacy and adult education, let us not forget the

SEVENTY-FOUR

literate adults. Sometimes, I find, Mr. Chairman, when you talk of adult literacy and adult education, we are so much pressed with the need of extending the area of literacy that we forget that there are 100 million literate people already in this country. And among the adults, as I told you just now there are already 58 million literate adults, and as far as adult education for parliamentary democracy is concerned, it is the literate people who have got to be got hold of. Therefore, our programme should not be only of literacy by those who acquired literacy. So the programme has got to be twofold—extension of literacy and utilisation of literacy by those who have already acquired literacy.

Then as far as this particular subject of democracy is concerned, and what education we should give, I am speaking with a certain amount of trepidation because democracy is not only a theoretical and academic subject, on which I can give lectures in the university. At the moment, I happen to be a member of a very important political party, and I also happen to be a member of the Government. Therefore, anything that I say on the subject of parliamentary democracy in the context of adult education might carry with it overtones that may not have accompanied it, if I had been giving this lecture as a professor in the University of Delhi. I would like to ask my friends, if they are prepared to believe, such a metamorphosis is possible for me to change my clothes from time to time, not my political clothes. Let me make that very clear—not my political cap or my political clothes. Well, it is possible for me to change my intellectual clothes from time to time, and for the time being I am trying to function much more as an academic rather than as a member of a political party. If you are prepared to believe it, please do believe it. At least, that is how I am trying to function at the moment.

Now the first thing which I think is important is when we talk of education—I am talking of the content of education—we should discuss how we can make adult education for democracy something which is worthwhile. This, I am sure, you will be discussing in your seminar. I am sure you are not going to discuss in your seminar only how many directors there should be, what their salaries should be, how many lower division clerks there should be, and so on. I am sure you are going to discuss, I hope you will spend much more time discussing what is going to be done by way of adult education for parliamentary democracy. It is only that aspect with which I am concerned.

First of all, it is very important to make it clear to the adult in this country what is the vote, what is the meaning of the vote. He has a vote. Now what does it mean? Having a vote, what responsibilities does the possession of a vote mean? Every one of us has a vote. We are asked by many people to exercise it. How do we exercise our vote? I tell you this because during my election campaign, one of the things that I invariably spent at least ten minutes on in my 180 or 190 election meetings in the rural areas, always was—I would always tell them that the vote is a very precious possession. It is not meant for barter, it is not meant for sale. It is not intended to show one's caste/loyalty or one's loyalty to somebody whose grandfather has known one's own grandfather. It is not intended to show linguistic loyalty, regional loyalty. It is intended to show the preference of the voter for a particular kind of political, economic and social programme. I think this is very important, Mr. Chairman. Even, for example, if you can bring out in the various languages something on the meaning of the vote, that the exercise of the vote is linked up with a

programme—political, economic and social programme. Simultaneously with that, somebody who is objective, must provide an opportunity for the voter to understand what the different programmes of the parties are. As a matter of fact, I think this is the one country in the world where party programmes are least explained to the electorate before their votes are asked for. I know there are printed pamphlets. But it will be very interesting if somebody were to find out, purely statistically, if there were 220 million voters in 1962, how many copies were printed of the Congress Party's programme or the Praja Socialist Party's programme, or by every other party. It would be very interesting if someone were to make a little statistical calculation to find out how many copies were actually printed; or you can take the latest election, 1967: how many copies were printed; how many voters had the opportunity to look at the programme, to study it to analyse it. At least there were about 60 million voters who were literate in 1962. Did the literate voters get an opportunity to look at the programme and to study it? And did we, all of us, belonging to all parties, start our political campaigning with the slogan that a vote has nothing to do with caste, language, personal or social relationship, but a vote is an expression of the individual's preference or lack of preference for a given political economic and social programme. I think therefore the most important thing that we should do is to teach the voter as to what the vote is, and indubitably link up the vote with programmes and policies and not with caste, language, region, social class, feudal authority, princely heritage, etc. etc.

Then the second thing I would like to suggest would be from the point of view of education, to set up voters' council or citizens' council in different districts.

I do not care what we call them—at the grassroots in talukas, in blocks, in districts and in other places somebody who is objective should prepare an evaluation of these programmes. I think it is very important. This cannot be done by any political party. After all, if I stand for a political party, it is my job to make my party win. I am not there as a judge, sitting in judgment on all the various political parties. I can do that if I am sitting in my university chair. The moment I join a political party I want to fight for that party and my objective becomes the success of my party and the defeat of other political parties. So you cannot expect from me a judicial approach, an objective approach, a research approach. If I had those approaches, I had no business to be in the party. A party has to fight for its own success. Therefore, the citizens' council or voters' council should—if I may say so, Mr. Chairman—by definition, exclude all would-be members of Parliament, all would-be MLA's, all would-be contestants for various democratic political organisations. At least, for a given period of time, they should say we are not interested, till at least the next elections, in contesting. Then there can be objectivity. The moment they themselves are interested, it is very difficult for them to be objective. Such voters' councils or whatever else you might call them, should draw up an evaluation, pointing out what is common and what is different. And very often I think you will find that differences in the political parties are not so much on programmes but are on individuals or on methods. I think it is important to have an analysis of the party programmes of various political parties.

It is also important, Mr. Chairman, if you do set up such district organisations, let somebody—perhaps Dr. Singhvi's institute may be able to do it because I do not



think his institute gets any grant from any Government or from any political party—do this type of evaluation, take a party's election manifesto and at the end of five years find out how much of that election manifesto has been implemented, or an attempt made to implement it. It is no good asking a partyman to do this evaluation. He is bound to say it has been implemented, or if it has not been implemented what difficulties beyond our control came in the way, etc. etc. Naturally, therefore, somebody who is objective should not only have an assessment and a comparative evaluation of the programmes of different parties, but also must, at the end of every election period, bring out a good monograph showing the comparative performance of the various parties. This is simple. For instance, take the election manifesto and bring out a brochure on every political party in this country. What did it promise the people and what has it done in implementation of the promises it made to the people. I think an objective analysis of this kind will go a long way in bringing about political education of the people. I only hope it will not induce disillusion with the concept of parliamentary democracy. We have got to try and see that that particular result is avoided.

Then one thing more I would say also. I think it is very important that for adult education for parliamentary democracy we must make it very clear that parliamentary democracy means discussion of programmes. I think there should be some organisation by which the parties come face to face. I believe in America they come face to face on television. I do not know if they come face to face or give lectures one after the other. I think in America they come face to face. I think in the UK they give lectures one after another. Now, this is not good enough. I would like the political parties to come face to face in

public discussion and there must be some organisation which must ensure not only order, also ensure that these people are really willing to answer the questions raised by the opponent. How do we educate the people? How is the voter to know what is the difference between the Communist Party (Marxist), the Communist Party (Right), the Communist Party (Fellow Traveller), the Communist Party which is hidden somewhere, or the Praja Socialist Party or the Samyukta Socialist Party or the Congress Party? How is the voter to know? How is he to evaluate? He is supposed to have a balance. What is his balance? He has got to weigh all these various parties and come to a decision which party he is going to vote for. How are we helping him to do that? If, therefore, we can have this kind of organisation, they can say that in this meeting there will be no disorder, nobody will speak for more than a certain number of minutes, the chairman will have tight control over the meeting and two political parties must face each other, not come and give their lectures and go away. There must be some provision made, at least in a few places for the leaders to have national debates. Have the leaders of the parties come together on a platform to have national discussions and debates. Something has got to be done from the point of view of giving the voter an opportunity to listen to the different aspects of various party programmes.

Then I may make one more suggestion. It would be a very good thing if some method could be evolved by which it could be found out whether, those who get elected, either as members of Parliament or members of Assemblies, and those who not only get elected but are entrusted with governmental responsibilities like ministers, can give an account of what they have done. There is no question of shame in this. A minister should be able to stand up and say

this is what I have done in the course of the last one year. This is what I have not been able to do. We of course say we have got the system of budgetary grants. But half the ministries get guillotined and about the other half, mainly the discussions turn on some grievance or another. But excepting in the case of two or three ministries, hardly any attempt is made to have a comprehensive macro-analysis of the performance of the ministry concerned. So some method must be found—here again is something where the Institute of Parliamentary Studies can play an important role—if we cannot do it in Parliament; I think the Institute of Parliamentary Studies should so arrange that each Minister should come and talk on what he has done and be subject to cross-examination by the audience. I think it is a marvellous thing. I think, as you are an alert audience, what the Minister, comes and says in 45 minutes, highlights what he has done and what he has not been able to do, will be subject to cross-examination. But there must be some platform where the Minister says what he has done and defends himself. Similarly, I think there must be a platform where the MP's go and tell their constituents what they have done; have meetings in constituents and not talk in general terms. What have I done as a member in the last session? How many speeches have I made? How many delegations have I led? How many grievances of the constituents have I put before the Government and got redressed? What have I done in the last three months, six months and one year? I think democracy requires accountability of those in whom the electorate places confidence. I only mention it.

I think I have more or less finished most of the things I had in my mind. All that I want to say is that when we talk of adult education for parliamentary government we should, in the first instance.

- (a) extend the whole domain of literacy;
- (b) along with the extension of literacy, we have to extend the domain of adult education; and
- (c) in this adult education that we are extending for the purpose of parliamentary democracy, we have to see, not only that the emphasis is based on the vote—which I think is most important—and the importance of programmes and policies in voting, but also that we have to emphasize linking up the voting with programmes and policies and not with community, caste, religion, creed, language and so on. Link up the voting with policies: that is the most important aspect of education that we want.

We have to see to it that the various parties fight one another intellectually and the voter gets an opportunity to judge between them while listening to a discussion and a debate.

Thirdly, we should provide a programme by which the voters will demand from those who are elected to come and give them periodic reports on their purposes and stand a cross-examination if those who have given them their confidence either by electing them to Parliament or by giving them offices as Ministers in the Government.

I think if anything of these that I have suggested, even a small portion of what I have suggested, is achieved by the organisation that you are thinking of in terms of some kind of an Institution for Adult Education for Parliamentary Democracy, you would have rendered the greatest service for the preservation of democracy and its intelligent and beneficial operation.

One last word, Sir, and I have finished my address. And that is, any institution of this kind must not depend at all on official or any party support. Otherwise, it just cannot function. I can assure you if you get money from somebody, and that somebody has got an interest, with all the best will in the world, it is very difficult to avoid some kind of influencing by the person from whom you get your money. So I would suggest, any institution of this kind that you set up, if you really want to go about it, to educate the Indian adult for purposes of parliamentary democracy, it has got to be financed by the people by contributing, maybe four annas, eight annas or anything. It has got to get its finances from non-party sources, from non-governmental sources. Otherwise, it may find it difficult to be objective, to look at truth and speak the truth, as truth should be spoken.

I am very glad, Mr. Chairman, that the Indian Adult Education Association and the Institute of Parliamentary Studies have joined their forces together to start this great new movement, which, I am sure, will not be just a seminar, but which, I hope, will become a movement for the education of Indian adults in the whole meaning, practices and implications of parliamentary democracy. Our parliamentary democracy is in some danger at the moment, as Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta pointed out, and one way of safeguarding it is to make it function better. And one way of making it function better is to get the voter to have a better understanding of the role that he has to play in the functioning of parliamentary democracy.

I have great pleasure in declaring the seminar inaugurated.



**ADDRESS  
AS CHIEF GUEST  
ON  
INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 8, 1969.

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**I** DEEM it a proud privilege and an honour to be associated with the celebration of the third International Literacy Day which is being celebrated throughout the world on the recommendation of XIV General Conference of the UNESCO (1966) and throughout our country on a request made by the Government of India and the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO. The primary objective of these celebrations is to awaken the public conscience to the urgency and need of liquidating mass illiteracy, wherever it exists, so that effective literacy campaigns may be formulated and implemented with financial support from the Governments and the public and the enthusiastic participation of teachers, students and

other social workers. It is, therefore, but proper that we should participate in these celebrations and help to create the necessary atmosphere for mounting large-scale campaigns for the liquidation of adult illiteracy which is a programme of special significance in the present situation in our country.

## II

It is hardly necessary for me to emphasise the importance of adult literacy and adult education as a powerful tool of human resource development. Without adult literacy and an organised programme of adult education, it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development which a developing country like ours urgently needs. Without them, it is also not possible to have that content or quality or tone in our economic and social development which makes it worthwhile in terms of values and welfare. A programme of adult literacy and adult education should, therefore, take a front place in any programme for economic and social development. A break-through in these fields will come only when a society transforms itself from largely illiterate into a mostly literate one.

In spite of this obvious urgency and significance of adult literacy and education, I am afraid that we in India have not been able to give a good account of ourselves in these fields. Very little had been done in this sector during the British period and we, therefore, started our Independence with a severe handicap—a mere 14 per cent of literacy in the population as a whole. The achievements

of the post-Independence period have definitely been somewhat better because literacy has grown, during the last 22 years, from 14 per cent to 33 per cent—at a rate of a little less than 1 per cent per year whereas between 1835 and 1947 it increased merely from about 3 per cent to 14 per cent or about 1 per cent per decade on an average. Good as this achievement is from one point of view, it is hardly adequate for the needs of social and economic development or the maintenance of our national dignity. What is worse, the number of illiterates in the country has increased immensely during the last 22 years because the population is increasing at a little more than 2 per cent per year while literacy increases at a little less than one per cent per year. It is also disgraceful that we make a very substantial contribution to the total illiterate population of the world. We must, therefore, reorientate our policies in these fields and achieve early liquidation of mass illiteracy while developing, side by side, a well-planned and extensive programme of adult education.

A rapid advancement in adult literacy requires a two-pronged attack. On the one hand, it is necessary to make the programme of primary education free and universal so that there are no additions to the ranks of adult illiterates from year to year. On the other hand, we must organise campaigns for liquidation of illiteracy amongst adults so that the dead-weight of illiteracy is lightened quickly. Unfortunately, we have considerable leeway to make on both these fronts. At the primary stage, we have been able to universalise facilities for primary education to a remarkable extent and about 97 per cent of our population now has a primary school within easy walking distance from the home of every child. With regard to enrolment also, we have made considerable progress and it has been estimated that about 90 per cent of the boys and 70 per

cent of the girls are actually enrolled in schools for some time at least. But our capacity to retain them in the schools is very poor so that the rates of wastage and stagnation are very large and out of every 100 children who enter class I, only about 40 reach class IV four years later, and only about 34 reach class VII seven years later. It is because of this that large numbers of children who are enrolled either do not attain literacy or lapse into illiteracy very soon afterwards. Consequently, the addition to the ranks of adult illiterates from year to year continues to be very large. In the same way, we have not also been able, with some noble exceptions like Maharashtra, to develop large-scale campaigns for liquidation of adult illiteracy. Our expenditure on adult education is pitifully small—about Rs. 8 million a year or less than 1 per cent of the total educational expenditure. In the first three Five Year Plans, adult education received very little attention. I made an intensive effort to accord priority to this programme when I was a Member of the Planning Commission and in the draft outline of the Fourth Plan which I then prepared, a sum of Rs. 74 crore was allocated to literacy programmes. But the little tempo then generated has again disappeared and in the present outline of the Fourth Plan, the allocation to literacy programmes and adult education has again fallen down to the earlier low levels. It is against this background of general apathy to the programme that we have to strive. I am drawing your attention to this, not from any sense of despair or defeatism, but merely to invite your attention to the magnitude of the problem and the immense difficulties which have to be overcome. What I want to emphasise is that our effort will have to be large and sustained if we desire to make any effective impact on the problem in the foreseeable future.

When I took over as Minister of Education about seven months ago, the draft outline of the new Fourth Five Year Plan had almost been finalised and there was very little time or possibility of making any radical changes therein. I was, therefore, compelled to concentrate my attention on emphasising three or four major programmes to which I attach great priority. Adult literacy and education was one of these and I have been able to introduce a paragraph in the Plan which lays down the broad outline of the programmes which need to be developed.

It says:

"Efforts will be made to spread literacy amongst adults through mobilisation of voluntary effort and local community resources. Pilot projects will be initiated in selected districts to begin with and the programme will be extended to other areas in the light of the experience gained. For the development of the programme, assistance will be sought from industry, from the students working under the National Service Scheme, and from voluntary organisations who will be assisted financially and given technical guidance. The programme of Farmers' Education and Functional Literacy in the high-yielding variety areas, already mentioned under Agriculture, will be extended to 100 districts and will cover one million adult farmers. Adult education will continue to be an integral part of the community development programme. The University Department of Adult Education will be helped to take up pilot projects, to conduct research and organise extension and extra-mural



lectures. It is proposed to set up a National Board of Adult Education to advise Government on the development programmes and for enlisting the co-operation of all the interests concerned and the different agencies involved."

Of course, the necessary finances to implement these programmes have not yet been provided adequately in the present Plan estimates. But it has been agreed that we could ask for these through the Annual Plans. Now that the work for finalising the entire Plan has been taken up again after the Report of the Fifth Finance Commission, I propose to follow up these suggestions and try my best to secure the needed allocations for them.

### III

Having thus indicated the broad outline of the programmes for adult literacy and education proposed to be developed over the next five years, I would like to invite your attention to a few essential programmes which alone can enable us to succeed in this undertaking.

The first is the need for the voluntary efforts of the people. I realise that the State has a very large responsibility in this programme, especially in providing the bulk of the financial support it needs. But, in my view, the responsibilities of the public, the voluntary organisations, the educational institutions, teachers and students are far greater. It is their united efforts alone that can help to create the necessary climate which is essential for the success of the programme, for inducing the adults to be literates, for maintaining the continuity

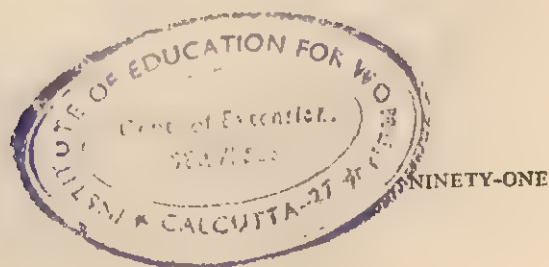
of their interest once they have joined a literacy class, for helping them to use and retain their newly acquired literacy and generally for creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the programme. It is therefore proposed to lay emphasis on working through voluntary organisations and a sum of Rs. one crore is provided for this purpose in the Central Plan and a detailed scheme is being drawn up. For the same reason, programmes of adult literacy and education are also being emphasised in the programmes of National Service whose implementation will soon start.

The second is the need to work amongst certain easily identified professional groups. For example, it is proposed to develop the programme of functional literacy amongst the farmers and to link it up with the Grow More Food Campaigns. Similar programmes can also be devised for several industrial categories of workers and special efforts will have to be made to spread literacy amongst women, among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and among the weaker sections of the community such as landless agricultural labourers.

The third is the urgency to mobilise human effort through an appeal to the patriotism and spirit of service of the people. If the programme of making the millions of illiterate people in our midst functionally literate is to be attempted on the basis of monetary resources alone, we will need very large allocations which are almost impossible in the present situation of financial stringency. There is no doubt that we must have larger allocations for this programme. But let us not forget that even the largest allocation we can think of, or receive, will be far too small in comparison to the magnitude of the problems facing us. We can, therefore, hope to solve them only by making every rupee go the longest way and by supplementing what

money can buy with what the dedicated efforts of the people can produce. In this programme, therefore, the 25 lakhs of teachers in the country, more than a crore of students that we have in secondary schools and colleges and other social workers have a very important part to play. It is their sense of dedication and spirit of service that alone can help us to solve this problem within the near future and within the range of financial allocations that are likely to be available.

I shall now conclude my observations by making an appeal, on this International Literacy Day, to all State Governments, local authorities, voluntary organisations, teachers and students to realise the gravity of the situation and the extreme urgency and significance of making India a literate society and to dedicate themselves to this task in right earnest. The framers of our Constitution initiated a great revolution by adopting adult franchise and by giving every adult the right to vote. Let us now complete this revolution by liquidating mass illiteracy, by making every adult functionally literate and by enabling him, through personal reading and study, to participate in the growing knowledge of the world. This alone will place our democracy on a stable foundation and generate the necessary climate and momentum for the creation of the new social order based on justice, equality, freedom and the dignity of the individual.



**INAUGURAL ADDRESS  
AT  
LITERACY/FAMILY PLANNING  
EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP**

NEW DELHI APRIL 1970

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I AM deeply sensible of the honour which the organisers of the Workshop have done me by asking me to inaugurate the Literacy/Family Planning Education Workshop for Near East/South Asia-East Asia Regions. At the outset, I would like to express my heartiest congratulations to Mrs. Welthy Fisher and the World Education Inc. for organising a workshop on this important subject. Mrs. Fisher is an institution by herself and her unbounded enthusiasm for promoting adult literacy programmes and single-minded devotion to the cause of uplifting the general level of the masses by linking literacy programmes with social and economic development, is a source of inspiration to all of us. An instance of her sensitivity to the urgent needs

of the hour, in the Indian situation today, is reflected in her organising this Workshop which will discuss the role of literacy and education in promoting family planning programmes.

## II

India's population problem is very acute. With only 2.4 per cent of the world's land, India maintains 14 per cent of the world's population. A baby is born every one and a half second. This means that every day 57,000 babies are born and every year 21 million babies are born. Annually, we have 21 million births and also 8 million deaths. The net result is that we add 13 million people to our fold every year. This, as you know, is more than the population of Australia. In 1950-51, the total population was 361 million, it increased to 439 million in 1960-61 and it was estimated to be 520 million in 1968-69 and we shall be 1,000 million after about 26 years, i.e. before the end of twentieth century. If this is not population explosion, what is it?

In 1921, our birth rate was 49 per thousand and the death rate was 48 per thousand. This means that the increase was one per thousand per year. Today, while the birth rate is 41 per thousand, the death rate is around 16 per thousand. Therefore, the rate of increase is 25 per thousand, and thanks to the public health facilities, the death rate will further decline. We have been successful in reducing the death rate, but not the birth rate.

The most depressing feature about this phenomenon is that the increase in population has nullified much of our developmental gains. During the last 18 years, the



investment on Plan programmes has been of the order of Rs. 21,894 crore. But there has been no corresponding rise in the per capita availability of goods and services. The rate of growth in our production—industrial as well as agricultural—just cannot keep pace with this astounding growth in population. While the estimated unemployed numbered only three million in 1951, their number rose to ten million in 1965-66 in spite of an additional 31 million jobs created by our developmental programmes. The number of educated unemployed now is estimated to be 1.4 million. There have been massive investments in the field of education. The total expenditure on education in 1950-51 was Rs. 1,143 million and it has increased to about Rs. 8,500 million in 1968-69. This rate of growth has been much higher than the rate of growth of national income. In spite of that, we find, to cite only one or two instances, that the percentage of children in the age-group 6-11, attending in primary classes, increased from 43.1 in 1950-51 to only 77.9 in 1968-69 and the percentage of adult literacy increased from 17 in 1950-51 to only 33 in 1968-69.

This is all because our population has increased by about 159 million during the last 20 years. I have said that 13 million is annually the addition to our population. What does it mean in terms of additional resources required to meet the needs of these 13 million additional population every year? On the basis of accepted norms, for an additional population of this size, we need 12.55 million quintals of food, 4 million new jobs, 189 million metres of cloth, 2.5 million houses, 126,500 schools, 372,500 teachers. Are we in a position to provide all this?

The Report of the Commission on International Development, popularly known as Pearson Commission

Report, submitted to the President, World Bank, in September last year, referring to India has, under social sectors, listed three areas of special concern—population, education and urbanisation. And about population, the Commission has made the following observations:

“The population problem in India has attracted attention for several years because it is so gigantic. The effect on development problems is vividly, if still inadequately, expressed in the simple fact that production must increase by 2.5 per cent annually simply to maintain average income per person. But the ramifications of the growth in population in India are far greater. The increases in population are reflected in the tremendous pressure on land, urban facilities and social services—pressure in addition to the urgent need to improve such services for the present population. These demands come on top of the needs of the present population—with a still substantial illiteracy rate and only half the eligible children in primary school—and the need to reform the present educational system to make it more relevant and responsive to India's requirements. The demographic problem itself is further compounded since the rapid rate of increase means that 45 per cent of the people are now less than twenty years of age. This in turn means more people of child-bearing age as a per cent of the total population and hence more children—at least potentially. The rapid rate of population growth also means substantial additions to the labour force. India already has at least 14 million underemployed, although

estimates are very uncertain. Given past rates of increase in population, about 4 to 5 million people are entering the labour force annually. Industry does not have the capacity to absorb the increases in labour force, and many of the newcomers remain unemployed or become the underemployed in the rural or urban sector, living in continued poverty. Those who remain in the rural areas increase the pressure for further sub-division of the land, already too often divided into tiny, uneconomic plots."

Thus our recent experience of planned economic development has been that, while it is important to think of the rate of investment that we can contrive to generate, and of the productivity of new capital (capital output ratio) growth of population turns out to be a negative factor which erodes whatever gains we achieved. And, because it has been to some degree an unpredictable factor, our Plans have been thrown out of gear from the point of view of inter-sectoral balances. Had we a determined policy of not leaving a slower growth of population to chance, our planning would have been meaningful. This shows how important a population policy is in the present circumstances not only for India but for the whole developing world.

### III

For too long a time we have been considering the population problem in terms of the food problem only. While I agree that the equation between population and food is fundamental, it is necessary to consider other

aspects of the problem like education and employment. In a country which has 200 million children, the demographic aspects of educational planning cannot be overemphasised. While there has been considerable discussion on the problems of skilled manpower, not enough emphasis has been given to the basic requirement of progress among the new generations. A broad-based population policy, and, I would like to add, manpower planning policy, should pay adequate attention to the infra-structure necessary to educate the new generations and also give them opportunities for productive employment.

I do not think it is necessary for me to dilate any further on the seriousness of the population problem in India, nor on the importance of our being able to bring about a significant reduction in the birth-rate and thus reduce the rate of growth of India's population. Obviously, the magnitude of the problem is such that it needs a multi-sided effort on the part of all agencies for its solution. One such important effort is in the direction of linking family planning campaigns and programmes with adult education and adult literacy.

Numerous attitudinal studies, which have been undertaken during the last ten to fifteen years, have invariably brought out how social and cultural attitudes to caste, kinship, religion, village and community ties, obscurantism, resistance to modernisation, refusal to change old attitudes have been unable to keep pace with the 'processes of material and scientific and technological change in our life. In the sensitive economic sphere, development demands the rationalisation of attitudes and behaviour. Psycho-technical and psycho-sociological studies indicate that the attainment of literacy is primary to the revolution

in mental structures and the development of attitudes which a modern worker needs. Literacy thus within the ambit of adult education represents a first stage in changing attitudes for adaptation to the present-day conditions. But, regrettably, interest in the educational side of the problem has generally restricted itself to technical research, training of technical personnel and preparation of some literature and audio-visual aids needed for publicity work in the field—all on a very limited scale. By and large, no serious effort has been made to consider the potentialities of adult education and adult literacy in tackling the problem. Much of the current interest in adult literacy centres on linking it with adult education and make it more meaningful to the adult. But even in the new version of what an adult needs, there is no serious concern for the population problem. Nor is there any significant evidence of this interest in the growing volume of literature put out for the neo-literates every year. This is a lacuna in our programmes of adult literacy and adult education that needs to be rectified.

#### IV

Literacy in India during the first 60 years of this century has had a retarded growth. The percentage of literacy has grown from 6.2 in 1901 to 24 in 1961 and it is expected that this may rise to over 34 in 1971 and to about 50 in 1981. Further, the position is particularly depressing in regard to literacy among females and in rural areas. While in 1961, the over-all percentage of literacy was 24 for all persons taken together, in the case of males it was 34.4 and in the case of females, it was 12.9.



Likewise, the percentage of literate population in urban areas was 41, but in rural areas it was only 19.

The current estimates are that over 150 million adults in the age-group 15-45 are illiterate. We are also told by demographers that there are 100 million couples in our country who are in the reproductive age-group of 15-45. And, as you know, the bulk of them are illiterate. Thus when we say that the objective of the family planning programme is to bring down the birth rate from 39 to 25 per thousand population, it really means that we must so educate and motivate the 100 million eligible couples in the reproductive age-group that they have a family of only two or three children. In this sense, the target group for increasing the food production in the country and for developing basic industries is also, by far, the target group for family planning. It is necessary, therefore, to concentrate on programmes for changing the very attitudes and set behaviour patterns of these adults both for increasing productivity per head and reducing the birth rate per married couple. This, I believe, can be done effectively through adult literacy programmes appropriately linked with adult education in crafts, technical skills, scientific attitudes and population control.

## V

The objective of literacy and family planning programmes should be to enable adults to understand that family size is controllable, that population regulation could facilitate development of a higher quality of life in a nation, and that a small family size could contribute

materially to the quality of living in an individual family. Adults should be induced to appreciate the truth of the norm that the Indian family of today and tomorrow should be small and compact with only two or three children. These ideas have to be introduced in the curricula of literacy classes in appropriate forms.

From the practical point of view, it is necessary to adopt a selective approach in the sense of concentrating programmes on identifiable groups of population. If large-scale surveys are undertaken to ascertain the attitudes to family size and family planning of major socio-economic and occupational groups, the information can be utilised for planning programmes for their literacy. To illustrate, it is generally acknowledged that landless agricultural labourers in the rural areas and industrial workers and slum-dwellers in urban areas have higher birth rates. Considerable information is also available to show that they have less attitudes favourable to family planning. Infant mortality is the highest and the child-rearing practices are the most traditional among these sections of the population. From this, it is clear that efforts for family planning should be more intense among these sections. For example, the concentration of agricultural labourers, industrial workers, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is available in the census handbooks tehsil-wise and taluk-wise. From this information, the areas of largest concentration can be located for intensive literacy and family planning programmes. Similar exercises can be carried on other socio-economic variables to provide guidelines for programmes and evaluation. It is very necessary to emphasise the need for undertaking intensive surveys before initiating programmes of literacy and family planning education.

The method and media of instruction for adult education in family planning will, no doubt, emphasise various types

of audio-visual aids, puppets, dramas, etc. It should not only include information with regard to the growth of population and the available resources of food and other materials but also indicate how and where knowledge can be obtained of various methods of family planning and their use in practice. It is not just enough to exhibit the visual aids but the programme should also include a follow-up programme, to measure its impact on the people at large, so as to plan future programmes accordingly. The choice of the reading materials and other literature, relevant to literacy and family planning education, has to be done very carefully and talented writers and authors commissioned to write out the materials first on a trial basis and then, after some experimentation in regard to its impact and receptivity, get the materials finally printed.

I would also like to emphasise that population should not be treated merely as a quantitative phenomenon or just an essay in numbers. It is the quality of the population that is most relevant both as a factor of growth and an end product of growth and numbers have to be treated in terms of the effect they have on quality either by way of deterioration or of improvement. My view is that family planning education is but a part of human resources development and that numbers and size of families should be thought as a determinant of quality and opportunities for improvement in quality rather than as an absolute factor related to food supply. I would also like to add that in influencing quality, numbers do not constitute the only relevant factor. We must also take into account health and nutrition. That is why I would suggest that population, literacy, and education programme should include items which will lead to the promotion of good health practices on the part of the adults, as also enable them to understand the relation between nutrition and health and

the manner in which they could improve their nutritional status without necessarily going in for larger deployment of financial resources. The reading materials and other literature to be prepared for adults should therefore take due note of this aspect. This calls for combined efforts of experts in the fields of adult literacy and family planning and authors of repute in the field of preparing materials for neo-literates in preparing suitable literature.

## VI

While I agree that seminars, conferences and workshops are helpful in bringing workers on a common platform and enabling them to exchange their ideas and experiences, I would urge that some concrete and action-oriented recommendations should emerge from these seminars and these should be followed up vigorously and the action taken should be reviewed in future meetings. I must add however that I have no faith in projects which emphasise expenditure of money than expenditure of thought and depend more on governmental effort than on voluntary support. Such projects, by their very nature, have a short-lived tenure and do not function as preliminaries to large-scale development of programmes. I would suggest that the projects formulated for linking literacy with family planning programmes should be less cost-oriented so that they can be duplicated in various parts of the country. I can assure you that if I get blue prints of such projects, it may be possible for me to extend financial and technical support, to the extent possible, for these projects, to worthwhile voluntary organisations working in the field. The projects should be such as will identify various methods

and approaches of effectively linking family planning and adult literacy.

## VII

I would like to conclude by reiterating that there can be no serious social and economic planning unless the ominous implications of uncontrolled population growth are understood and acted upon. I would also like to strike a note of warning here that no well-conceived population control programmes can make any lasting impact on an illiterate population. Illiteracy and large families go together and if we want to deal with one we have also to deal with the other. Hence the importance of literacy and of linking literacy with family planning.

I have pleasure in inaugurating this Workshop on Literacy and Family Planning.



**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS  
AT  
THE FIRST MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL BOARD OF  
ADULT EDUCATION**

NEW DELHI MAY 1970

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**I** T IS A MATTER of great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the First Meeting of the National Board of Adult Education. It is indeed a landmark in the history of Indian education that we are meeting today to discuss various policies and programmes relating to adult education and adult literacy, under the auspices of the National Board which represents the Central and State Governments and various interests in this field. It was about six years back, when I was in the Planning Commission, that I had suggested the constitution of a high-powered board to consider seriously the problems relating to the much neglected field of adult education and

adult literacy in our country. I am, therefore, personally happy that it has been possible to convene the meeting of the National Board. I know, I am sharing this happiness with many other friends here and elsewhere. May I express the hope that the setting up of the Board will prove to be not an alternative, but a preliminary to action.

I am sure that, with your help and cooperation, it will be possible to forge ahead with our schemes for the acceleration of growth of adult education and adult literacy in our country. I would appeal to my counterparts in the States and Union Territories to set up similar Boards, with their manifold programmes, which should be the centres for stimulating a nation-wide programme of the eradication of illiteracy. These Boards should be innovators of new ideas and practices, promoters of further programmes and evaluators of continuing projects. I am sure that voluntary organisations, who form the backbone of this movement, will be duly represented in these Boards. It is thus that the national programme of the eradication of adult illiteracy will get the necessary popular and political support. These State Boards should be supported by proper organisations providing necessary technical and secretarial assistance. We have done so at the Centre by transferring the Department of Adult Education of the National Council of Educational Research and Training to the Ministry of Education and Youth Services as the Directorate of Adult Education and this will provide the necessary technical and secretarial assistance to the National Board.

The Secretariat of the Board has circulated the agenda papers covering a large number of items. An attempt has been made to indicate the magnitude of the task in the field of illiteracy and to review critically the programmes of adult literacy implemented during the post-independence

period and highlight concrete programmes of adult education and adult literacy supported by a massive programme of book production and a network of libraries which need to be initiated by various agencies.

Looking back, we find that the percentage of literacy in India has risen from 6.2 to 33 during the period 1901 to 1969. But the number of illiterates, which was 298 million in 1951 has now increased to 349 million in 1969. As against the over-all national percentage of literacy of 33, the percentage of literacy among women was only 13 and that in rural areas only 19. Out of 106 million literates in 1961, only 7.8 per cent were matriculates, intermediates, graduates, etc. while the remaining 92.2 per cent or 97 million persons had only middle school qualifications and below. In 1961, the population in the age-group 15-30, which roughly represents the youth was 110 million or 25 per cent of the total population, and amongst them, only 37 million or about 39 per cent were literates. The age-group, which constitutes the working force and is very important from the point of view of production capacity of the country, both in the industrial and agricultural sectors is 15-44. Percentage of illiteracy in this age-group fell from 69 in 1961 to 65 in 1969, but the number of illiterates increased from 131 to 150 million. This shows that the bulk of the working force in the country is in the same state of illiteracy as it was earlier and their numbers are increasing. Our estimate is that with the current rate of population growth, the rate of development of education would not make much impact on the number of people who would be illiterate and it is estimated that, in 1981, while the percentage of literates may go up to 50, the number of illiterates would become 358 millions.

No sensible Indian can look at this situation without profound dissatisfaction, especially when we take pride in

calling ourselves a democratic country where all adults, from the age of 21, have the right to vote and elect their representatives to constitute their Government in the States and at the Centre. Illiteracy and progress do not go together. Literacy is the most important instrument for communication. From the point of view, therefore, of either economic development or national integration or social cohesion or cultural advancement or preservation of democracy, it is essential that our attempts, both in rural areas and in urban areas, and including both men and women, should be to achieve a 100 per cent literacy amongst them.

I am also appalled by the impact of our population growth on adult illiteracy. As you know, India's population problem is very acute. Every year we have 21 million births and eight million deaths. The net result is that every year we are adding to our population more than the population of Australia. There is a direct co-relationship between the high rate of illiteracy and the high rate of births.

The current estimates are that over 150 million adults in the age-group of 15-45 are illiterate. We are also told by demographers that there are 100 million couples in our country who are in the reproductive age-group of 15 to 40. And, as you know, the bulk of them are illiterate. Thus, when we say that the objective of the family planning programme is to bring down the birth rate from 35 to 25 per thousand population, it really means that we must so educate and motivate the 100 million couples in the reproductive age-group that they have limited families. In this sense, the target group for increasing the farm production in the country and for developing basic industries is also, by far, the target group of family planning. From

every point of view, therefore, we must pay much more attention to the promotion of adult literacy than we have done so far.

Let us also not forget the base of parliamentary democracy in India. If, we take the population of the age-group 20 and above, the number, according to the census definition of 1961, was 223 million and only 58 million, among these, were literate. And we know that the number of people who voted in 1962 was around 125 or 130 million. At least half of the people who voted in the 1962 election, therefore, were not literate. They must have put their cross on the ballot paper, going only on the basis of election symbols of the candidates, if at all. Obviously, therefore, extension of adult literacy/mass literacy, is a 'must' for the survival of real parliamentary democracy in our country.

What I am really concerned about is the population in the age-group 14-44. As I have said earlier, the illiterate among them is likely to be 150 million or so. By using conventional norms of making an adult literate, we will need something like over Rs. 4,500 million to make this age-group literate. We have no resources of this order available today, nor do I imagine, will we have these resources available in the near future. What do we do then? Can we not launch upon a big national movement in our country, where all educated people in every mohalla, village, taluka, district, city and town, factories and farms, take a pledge that they will make their brothers and sisters literate? I would like to take this opportunity of appealing to all students in colleges, universities and high schools to take up localities, villages, mohallas in their vicinity for the liquidation of illiteracy and do what other countries had done in similar situations. It has to



be a big national campaign which has to be sustained not a few weeks or months, but at least half a decade. Let us call it an *Indian Literacy Quinquennium*.

In the absence of adequate financial resources, it seems necessary to adopt unconventional means for an all-out national mobilisation of resources, until the nation has cleared the hump of illiteracy. The essence of mass approach lies in the determined mobilisation of all available educated men and women in the country to constitute a force to combat illiteracy and an effective organisation and utilisation of this force in a well-planned literacy campaign. This approach, may be unorthodox but it has been tried elsewhere. The mass approach has been a success in a number of countries like USSR, Cuba, Indonesia, etc. In a different way and on a smaller scale, this approach is being attempted in Maharashtra through the scheme of Gram Shikshan Mohim. I would particularly like you to consider this mass movement for purposes of working out urgent pilot projects to try out this approach in other parts of the country. The special feature of this movement is that it exploits local village patriotism to eliminate illiteracy from the village and mobilizes the teachers and all the local educated men and women to work for literacy. The scheme costs very little and its gains are much more than what can be measured in terms of literacy. It is, however, necessary that such mass literacy programmes are backed by an effective programme of follow-up in terms of reading materials, literature, provision of books, circulating libraries, etc.

I am one of those who would not like to plunge into a programme without trying it on a selective basis under varying conditions. The mass approach of literacy is no doubt important but its efficacy has to be tried in various

parts of the country. I would now like therefore to launch pilot projects of adult education and adult literacy in various parts of the country, both in urban and rural areas, in order to find out the following:

- (a) The age-group which is more responsive to literacy training;
- (b) Factors which motivate the average adult;
- (c) The type of literate required for literacy work and its follow-up;
- (d) The best method/methods to be adopted for teaching the adult illiterates;
- (e) How the results could be achieved with minimum cost?

After trying out these pilot projects and learning from their results, we can initiate a big national programme for the eradication of adult illiteracy. The Central Government would be prepared to provide assistance to the State Governments and voluntary organisations for initiating such pilot projects. Through these projects, it should be possible for us to find out new ways of tackling this problem where the accent will be on maximum public participation.

As part of the action programme, as you already know, we want to get the university and college students involved in a big way. That is why, we have now agreed that one of the important components of the National Service Programme for university and college students will be that

of spreading literacy. I want young boys and girls to take an active part in this big national task. I would ask them to go out to villages, to the factories, to the farms and to the hilly and tribal areas not only to preach the gospel of literacy but also to teach them. If they do this, they will have partially realised the commitment which they will owe to the community which spends so much on them for their education. I want the senior students of secondary schools to take upon themselves the most rewarding task of spreading literacy in the areas they live in. This has been done by their brothers and sisters in other parts of the country like Maharashtra.

In this national task, our 23 lakhs of teachers have an important part to play. I appeal to them to give a helping hand in this grand adventure, as it would be the most single contribution which they could make, as the educated elite of the country, to the spread of education amongst their brethren. They have to guide and supervise the work of their students. They will thus be the pioneers of a big movement for which the country will be ever obliged to them.

Voluntary organisations in this country have played a very significant role in promoting various ideas and implementing programmes which ordinarily cannot be undertaken by State Departments. I believe that adult literacy programme is one such programme which cannot be organised formally through the institution of one single department. It has essentially to be a people's programme where the community takes on an active part. Voluntary organisations represent the collective will of the people to innovate, to promote and to implement programmes with or without governmental support. I have no doubt that voluntary organisations working in the field of education,

social welfare, community welfare, tribal welfare, women's welfare and the like will come forth in a big way to help this national task in an ample measure. Government will try to support them to the extent possible. As you know, we have formulated a revised scheme, containing somewhat liberal terms of assistance to voluntary organisations working in the field of adult education. Centre's efforts in this field can only be marginal and in the nature of promotional programmes. The State Governments, I would suggest, should also formulate programmes on similar lines for their State-, district- and village-level voluntary organisations.

I would also like to take this opportunity of appealing to various Governmental departments dealing directly or indirectly with various types of programmes of adult education, both at the Centre and States, to pool their resources of men, money and materials. It is high time that we free ourselves from problems of departmental jurisdiction and forge a united front to tackle this national problem. This type of close collaboration is not only necessary at the national and State levels, but is even more important at the district, taluka and village levels. I am convinced that, for the success of literacy programmes, joint efforts and close collaboration between the various developmental departments is absolutely necessary. May I hope that this close collaboration will be established through the setting up of the Boards of Adult Education, not only at the Central and State levels but even at the district and taluka levels.

Organisation of campaigns for the eradication of illiteracy by itself may not involve large sums of money, but let us not labour under the illusion that the work of literacy can end with the imparting of literacy. The programme of



literacy without follow-up is meaningless. What is important is a vigorous follow-up action in terms of production of books, provision of libraries at various levels, training of literacy workers, night schools, extension programmes, continuation education, etc. This needs trained men, materials and money and cannot be done purely on voluntary basis. Money is required for the preparation, production and distribution of reading materials for neo-literates, organisation of mobile libraries, setting up of village libraries, district libraries, headquarter libraries, production of newspapers and journals suitable for neo-literates, organisation of training programmes for writers, literacy workers, etc. In the Fourth Plan, as you know, there is hardly any provision for these types of activities at the Centre and in the States. The total allocations for adult education and adult literacy programmes may not exceed Rs. 10 to 11 crore. May I appeal to the State Governments to find out some resources for such programmes either from their Plan or non-Plan allocations. I know that finance is scarce, but surely we can find something for such an important national cause. I would also like to appeal to the various philanthropic bodies, trusts and foundations, in our country as well as to individuals to contribute their mite for this type of programme. They may not be able to spare their time and manpower but their monetary contributions for promoting this cause would be deeply appreciated. The resources of the order required for such programmes may not be available at this stage from governmental funds but that does not mean that the community at large cannot come to the rescue with their voluntary contributions. I would also try to do whatever is possible for me at the Centre to find some more resources for this programme.

Before I conclude, I would like to pay my tribute to the Government and people of Maharashtra for the earnestness



with which they have taken up this problem of liquidating adult illiteracy. You are familiar with the Gram Shikshan Mohim Movement which has been the principal instrument they have used for this purpose. The movement has now succeeded to such an extent that a number of districts in Maharashtra can proudly claim to have 100 per cent literacy. They have not only made the people literate but they have also produced considerable volume of neo-literate literature available at practically nominal prices. I do hope the example of Maharashtra will prove infectious and it would be possible for us to say that within a reasonable foreseeable future the whole of India has become literate and has also facilities for using its literacy.

I realise that I have not comprehensively touched upon other allied problems of adult education, further education, extension education, etc. It is not that I am unaware of these important aspects of adult education. Literacy is the magic casement which opens on all perspective knowledge and it is literacy that strengthens a human being's mature judgement. Hence my accent on adult literacy and adult education.

On this red-letter Day, in the history of adult education, I would like to appeal to my friends here and countrymen to realise the gravity of the situation and to take up the task of liquidation of illiteracy in India and lend their support in terms of their time, energy and other resources. Let us assure that light spreads throughout the length and breadth of this country. Then only can we breath a really fresh air of hope and fulfilment and thus usher in real freedom to our country.

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GMGIPND—M—12 Edu.—28-8-70—3,300.

**Publication No. 897**

PRINTED BY THE GENERAL MANAGER  
GOVT. OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI.

COVER DESIGN : SOL BUSINESS PROMOTION

